

CAUTION! All readers of the renowned Tip Top stories should beware of base imitations, placed upon the market under catch names very similar to Frank Merriwell, and intended to deceive.

TIP TOP WEEKLY

AN
IDEAL PUBLICATION
FOR THE AMERICAN YOUTH

Issued Weekly. By subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second-class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 Seventh Ave., N. Y.

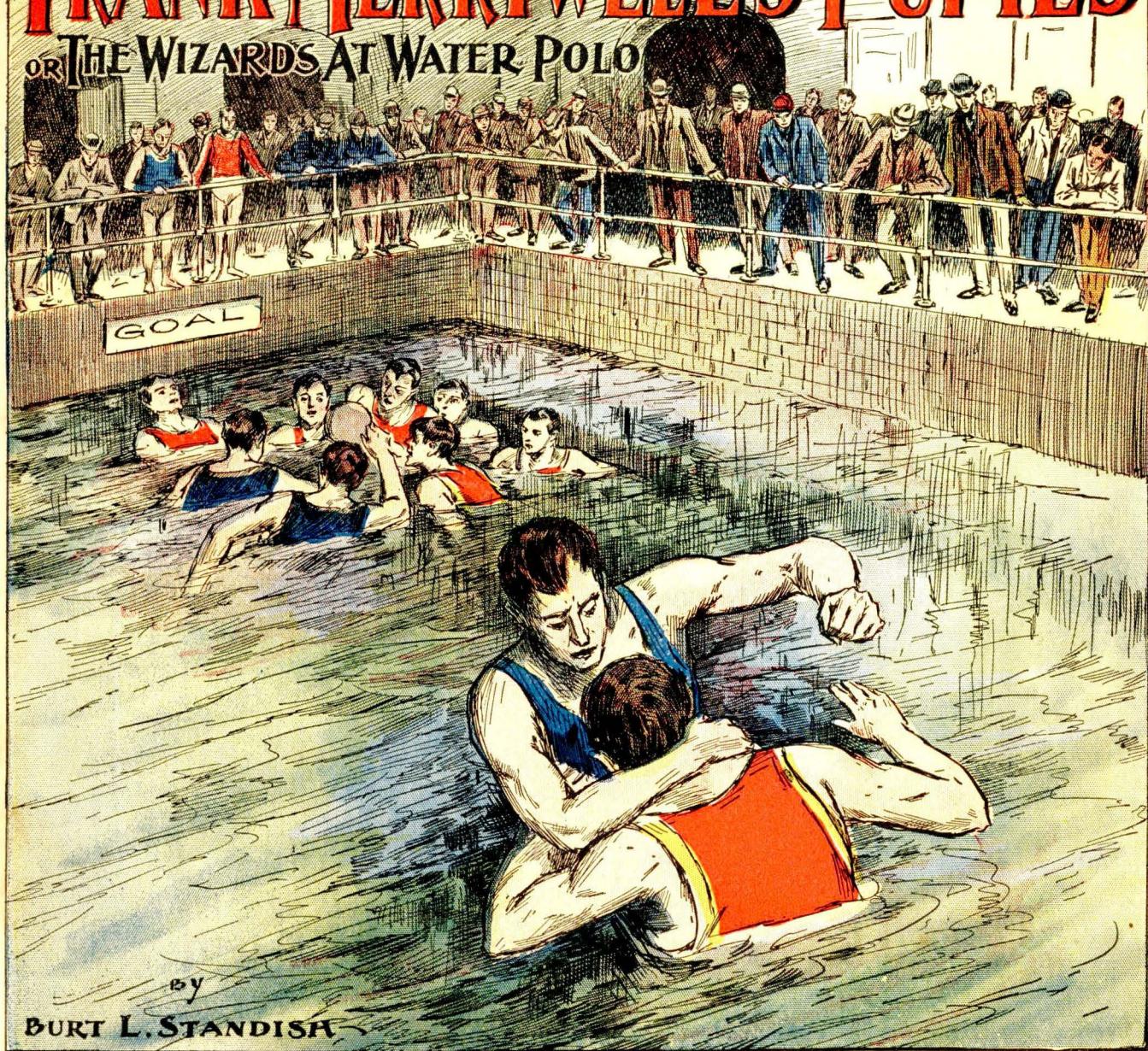
No. 514

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 17, 1906.

Price, Five Cents

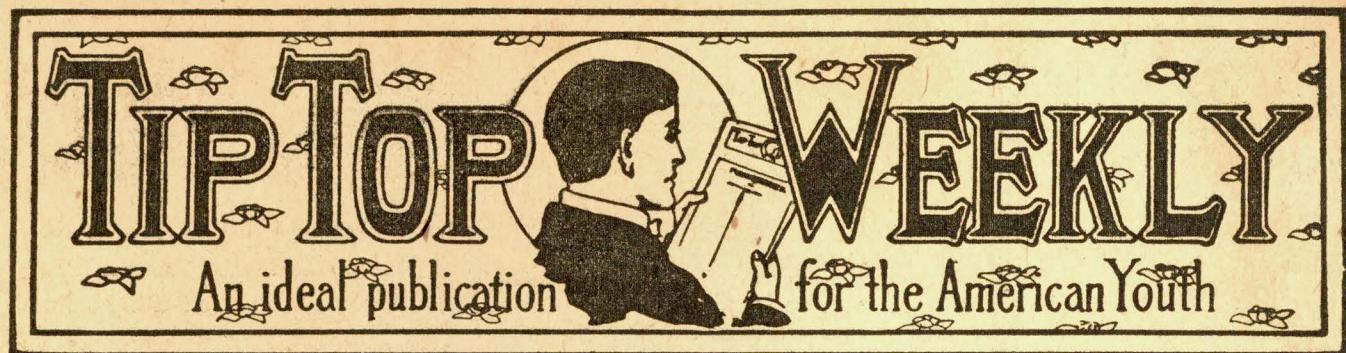
FRANK MERRIWELL'S PUPILS

OR THE WIZARDS AT WATER POLO



By
BURT L. STANDISH

Again the baffled captain of the Wellsburg team lost his head. Seizing Bemis about the neck, Cooley struck him in the face with his fist.



Issued Weekly. By subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second-class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 70-80 Seventh Avenue, N. Y. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1906, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.

No. 514.

NEW YORK, February 17, 1906.

Price Five Cents.

FRANK MERRIWELL'S PUPILS;

OR,

THE WIZARDS AT WATER POLO.

By BURT L. STANDISH.

CHAPTER I.

A SOURED SOUL.

After sitting nearly a full hour staring at the flames in the open fireplace, Deacon Elnathan Hewett rose, crossed the room, breathed upon the frosted window-pane until he had melted away the frost in a small round circle, then placed his hands at either side of his face and peered out upon the moonlit wintry landscape.

Mrs. Hewett's knitting-needles stopped clicking for a few moments, and she turned her head so that she could scan the back of her silent husband.

"What's the matter, deacon?" she asked. "You're not feelin' first-rate to-night, be you?"

The only reply to her question was a grouchy grunt.

Mrs. Hewett shrugged her shoulders, and her needles began to click once more. She was a large woman,

with a strong determination and almost masculine cast of countenance.

The deacon was a tall, thin man, with a pinched nose and a pair of cunning eyes, which were set much too near together.

Outside was heard the sound of youthful laughter. Passing footsteps creaked on the dry snow, and the laughter died out in the distance.

Deacon Hewett turned from the window.

"Laugh! laugh!" he muttered bitterly. "Everybody seems to laugh when they come by here. I s'pose they're laughin' at me, drat 'em!"

"Why, deacon!" exclaimed Mrs. Hewett remonstratingly.

He did not give her even a glance as he returned to his chair close at one side of the open fireplace.

"I'm no fool," he continued muttering. "I know the whole village has been laughin' at me 'cause I

didn't have no fire-insurance and we got burned out of house and home. I allus said insurance rates was too high, and I say so now."

"I think you're mistaken 'bout our neighbors, deacon," said Mrs. Hewett, pausing a moment and thrusting her spectacles up on her forehead. "I don't believe nobody round here is heartless enough to laugh at our misfortunes."

"Oh, you don't, hey?" snapped Elnathan, still staring into the fire. "Well, I believe it! I know it! Some people has had the cheek to tell me I was a fool 'cause I didn't carry no fire-insurance. Old Eb Small told me so to my face. It's a great thing to have a man like him talk to me that way. He ain't got a thousand dollars' wuth of property he can call his own."

"You must acknowledge, deacon, that it would have been much better for us had we taken out fire-insurance on the old home. Still, it's too late to cry over spilt milk. We've got enough left, so I guess we can build a new house in the spring. Folks has been real kind and sympathetic to me."

"Well, they ain't been so to me!" snarled Elnathan. "They've even told me I brung it all on myself by takin' Courtney into the house that night."

"So you did, deacon—so you did," grimly asserted his wife. "Had I been home when that man come, you'd never sneaked him in and put him to bed in our spare chamber. I made you turn him out once, and I thought he was gone from Bloomfield for good. You made a mistake in ever havin' anything at all to do with him. You done it simply because you was mad with Frank Merriwell."

The deacon uttered a savage exclamation, smiting the arm of his chair was his skinny clenched hand.

"Dod gast Frank Merriwell! Don't speak his name to me! I don't want to hear it! He's the cause of all my misfortune! He's my enemy, and I hate him!"

"The Good Book says, 'Love thine enemies.'"

"Now don't go to quotin' scripter, Mirandy! I'm human; I'm no angel. There is things which are too much for flesh and blood to bear. I've got the best of reasons for hatin' Merriwell, and you know it. If that man had never come back here, I'd have the old Farnham property now. If he'd never come back here, our house wouldn't have been burned over our heads. He's the cause of it all! I can't ever forgit it. I remember it, and I keep thinkin' of it all the time."

"Deacon, I think you'd better withdraw from the church. The older you grow, the more crabid, and

sour, and revengeful you git. You don't seem never to forgive nuthin'."

"Forgive! forgive! forgive!" croaked Hewett. "I'm tired of that word! Who does ever forgive? It's all right to forgive somebody who's done ye a little injury. Mebbe one kin do that. But when it comes to a case like this, there ain't no such thing as forgivin'."

"It might be a good thing for you, Elnathan, if you'd foller the example of the young man you call your enemy. Look at what he's done."

"Well, what has he done?"

"He was on hand when our house burned. He worked like a Trojan helpin' lug out our furniter an' things. But that ain't all he done. When Courtney was seen in the chamber winder and when he fell down, overcome by smoke, didn't Frank Merriwell climb a ladder to that winder and go right inter the burnin' room so that he could bring Courtney out? Then didn't he take Courtney to his house and call a doctor and hire nusses and see that the man had the very best of keer till he rekivered? You know he done these things. Courtney hated Merriwell. He'd tried to injure him. Merriwell might 'a' had Courtney locked up and sent to prison. Did he do so? No, siree, Deacon Hewett! He done nuthin' of the kind! 'Stead of that, he was the Good Samaritan. He bound up his enemy's wounds. He restored his enemy to health. Then he bade his enemy go. That's what I call Christian forgiveness and the true Christian spirit, Elnathan Hewett. Until you kin git some of it in your withered old heart, you'd better take yourself out of the church and cease to claim that you're a religious man. There, I've had my say, and I feel better."

"I don't doubt it!" sneered the deacon. "You allus feel better after you've dug me and clawed me to your heart's content. Nuthin' seems to give you so much satisfaction as to rip me up the back. Oh, you're a kind and consolin' wife, you be! Instead of standin' by your husband, you turn agin' him and stand up for his enemies."

"When I know you are in the wrong, Elnathan, I feel it my duty to tell you so."

"Well, I've heerd it enough lately, and I don't want to hear no more of it. Hark! Listen to that!"

Once more there came the sound of creaking footsteps passing the house, accompanied by murmuring voices and merry laughter.

"Hear 'em laugh, woman!" rasped the deacon. "That's the way of it all the time now. I tell ye they're laughin' at me—at me! Where be all them young

folks goin' to-night, anyhow? What are so many of them trapsin' by here for?"

"I s'pose they're goin' to the party."

"What party?"

"Why, the party at Mrs. Gladleigh's. She's givin' a party to-night for her daughter, Phyllis. You know Phyllis came home from Wellsburg for a few days, along with our Sadie."

Footsteps were heard descending the stairs. The door flew open, and into the room danced a young girl in fancy costume, gotten up to represent a fairy. Tiny tinsel wings glittered on her shoulders, and golden curls made an aureole about her face, which was hidden by a filmy mask. She posed gracefully in the fire-light by the open hearth.

"How do you like my costume, mother?" she cried laughingly.

Deacon Hewett rose to his feet, seeming to quiver in every limb, while his eyes glared with anger.

"Disgraceful!" he shouted. "What's this I see? Is it our Sadie, togged out in the finery of Satan? Look at that dress! It barely reaches below her knees. No wonder she hides her face for shame! She's wearing a wig! She's fixed up like one of them indecent stage females I seen at a show in Wellsburg."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Hewett. "You didn't tell me 'bout no show you see in Wellsburg. How'd it happen I never heerd anything 'bout this?"

The deacon realized that, in his excitement, he had made a bad break. Therefore, he hastened to say:

"I jest went in a minute, Mirandy, to see what sort of a show it was. When them shameless females come out in their short dresses I got right up and left the place. I didn't tell ye 'bout it, Mirandy—no, I didn't tell ye, for I couldn't speak of it without blusin' for shame. Now here's our girl—our adopted daughter—a-fixed up jest like one of them wimmen. What does it mean?"

"Why, I'm going to Phyllis Gladleigh's masquerade party," said the girl. "Every one who goes will be in fancy costume."

"You'll not go!" roared the deacon. "I'll never permit you to set foot outside of this house in such a rig as that!"

CHAPTER II.

MRS. HEWETT HAS HER WAY.

Mrs. Hewett rose and placed her knitting on the mantelpiece.

"You're getting very excited, Elnathan," she observed mildly.

"Excited, woman—who wouldn't git excited? I'm surprised at you! I'm amazed that you countenance such shamelessness!"

The girl removed her mask, revealing a rather pretty face, from which gleamed a pair of dark eyes, now filled with astonishment and indignation.

"Why, you told me I might wear this costume, mother," she said.

"Is it possible? is it possible?" shouted Hewett. "Mirandy, have you grown daffy in your old age? It can't be you realize what a spectacle the child would make of herself."

"I'm no child, father," said the girl. "I'm almost a young lady. I've been away at boarding-school."

"Yes, you have—you have, against my counsel and my will! I objected to it, but my objections were overruled. Boarding-school, hey? See what silly notions it has put into your head. Your mother should be proud of you!"

"Now, that will do, deacon," came sternly from Mrs. Hewett's lips. "It's true you was dead set against permitting Sadie to attend school at Wellsburg."

"There are plenty of schools right here to home."

"Such as they are. But they are not advanced enough for a girl like Sadie."

"A girl like her!" sneered the man. "Why, who is she? Didn't we take her out of an orphan asylum? Didn't we 'dopt her and give her a good home? Now she is gittin' her head full of folderol and silliness and wants to be a fine lady. She pestered us 'bout goin' away to boardin'-school, though she knew I was agin' it. Arter awhile she won you over, and you let her go. I told you no good would come of it. I told you she'd git proud and high-strung and be ashamed of the folks who had brought her up and keered for her same as if she was our own child."

"Oh, but that isn't true!" exclaimed the girl. "You know it's not true! I'm not ashamed of you!"

"Course ye'd say so. That's policy. I've noticed that female wimmen are allus full of policy. They kin soft soap folks as long as they want to, but when they can't gain anything more by it then they turn round t'other way. So Phyllis Gladleigh is goin' to give a masquerade party? I s'pose her folks encourage her in such doin's. It's jest like 'em. They've been agin' me all through my trouble with this Merriwell."

"Merriwell?" exclaimed Sadie questioningly. "Why, Phyllis says he's a splendid young man, and his school is going to be a great thing for Bloomfield. Lots of boys from that school will be at the party tonight. They have been invited."

"That settles it!" thundered Elnathan. "I won't have no gal from my roof associatin' with them boys! Go right to your room and take off them togs as quick as you kin!"

The girl turned appealingly to Mrs. Hewett.

"Wait, Sadie," said the deacon's wife, "I'll reason with him a little."

"You can't reason with me! I refuse to reason! I won't listen!" cried the excited man.

"Oh, yes, you'll listen, Mr. Hewett. You're overstrung. You're all wrought up. You'd better set down and be calm."

The deacon began pacing the room, his hands clasped behind his back and his thumbs nervously circling round each other.

"I've said my say, and I mean it," he declared.

"Now I'll say my say," came from his wife. "I've told Sadie she might attend the party. Mrs. Gladleigh will be there to look after the young folks and see that everything is all right. It will be perfectly respectable, and there's no reason why Sadie should not go. You have some old-fashioned notions in your head, deacon. You think 'cause young folks in your time had to be stiff and prim that young folks to-day ought to be jest the same. Young people has to have some enjoyment. As long as their pleasures are innocent and do no harm, it's best for them. I feel sure that this party will be all right. I wouldn't think of keepin' Sadie to home now, arter I've said she might go. I've never interfered with you when you've told her she might do a thing. Now it's your place not to interfere with me. It's a bad thing for us to disagree over this matter before her."

"You've heerd what I have to say!" growled the deacon.

"And you've heerd what I have to say! Sadie is goin' if she wants to, even if I have to go with her!"

"Oh, there's a splendid fellow coming to escort me," said the girl.

"One of them fellers from Merriwell's school, I s'pose!" sneered Elnathan.

"No, indeed. It's Jack Cooly, from Wellsburg. He's just the nicest fellow, and all the girls like him. He's captain of the Wellsburg Academy Baseball Team."

"Baseball!" snickered the deacon. "Fiddlesticks! fudge! rot! That's what this Merriwell is goin' to teach his boys—baseball, football and all them foolish games."

"Every fellow who amounts to anything nowadays goes in for athletics," declared Sadie.

"Mirandy, if this girl is ruined, you're to blame for it!" rasped Elnathan. "She's got her head plumb full of foolish idees! All she thinks of is fellers! She's too young! It ain't right for a gal of her age to be runnin' round with fellers. We don't know nuthin' 'bout this Cooly chap."

"He isn't my fellow," said Sadie. "He didn't come over here to see me. He came to see Phyllis. He's going to take me to the party because Phyllis asked him to."

"Elnathan," spoke Mrs. Hewett seriously, "I believe our Sadie is a good girl, with some sense in her head. More girls have been sp'iled by their folks refusin' ever to let them have any company than has been sp'iled by havin' decent, respectable fellers escort them to parties. When you tell a girl she shan't have nuthin' to do with fellers and she sees other girls who, with the permission of their parents, associate with respectable boys, then there's a rebellion rises up in her heart, and she jest says she's being abused. When a girl gits the idee in her head that she's being abused by her folks she's treadin' on dangerous ground, for she's almost sartin to do something sly and underhand, and in this way she learns to disobey and deceive and becomes a hypocrite. Deacon Hewett, I don't want our Sadie to become no hypocrite. She's allus been brought up to confide in me. She's allus told me all her troubles and trials, and, now that she's goin' to school and the young fellers are takin' notice of her, I want her to tell me everything jest the same as she has before. I believe that's the proper way for a mother to treat a girl. I believe that's the safe way to bring up a girl. If you had your way, you'd refuse to let Sadie have anything to do with boys, and the result would be that she'd fool you, and she wouldn't be to blame, either."

"Hold on! hold on!" shouted the deacon. "You're filling her head with false notions! Why, you're practically tellin' her she'd be doin' jest right if she did try to fool me! You ain't never had no children of your own, and I don't know but it was the Lord's blessin', if you hold to such idees as them."

"It wasn't the Lord's blessin'," murmured Mrs. Hewett sadly. "It was our misfortune. When will the young man call for you, Sadie?"

"Why, I expect him any minute, mother."

"Get on your wraps."

"Yah!" snarled the deacon. "So I'm defied, be I? I ain't got a bit of authority in my own house!"

"It ain't your house, deacon," reminded his wife. "It ain't even my house. It's a rented house. Our home is in ashes, through your folly. Now you set

down, deacon, and be quiet. We'll talk this matter over arter Sadie's gone."

"I won't set down! I refuse to set down! I'm no child!"

Mrs. Hewett walked over to her husband, placed her hands on his shoulders, backed him toward his chair and deliberately forced him down upon it.

"Now you set there," she said, holding up a finger before his face; "you set there till I tell you you can git up!"

Elnathan spluttered, and grumbled, and gurgled—but he remained seated.

Footsteps were heard briskly approaching the door. A moment later there was a sharp knock.

"That's Jack—that's Mr. Cooly!" exclaimed Sadie.

"Tell him to come right in," said Mrs. Hewett—"tell him to come right in and git warm."

Sadie hurried to the door and returned, escorting a young fellow, whose cheeks were glowing from the cold.

"Jack," she said, "this is my mother and father. This is Mr. Cooly, from Wellsburg."

"I'm glad to meet you, Mr. Cooly," said Mrs. Hewett, taking the boy's hand and looking him straight in the eyes. "You're going to escort our Sadie to the party. I hope you'll look out for her."

The deacon gave a grunt and turned his chair squarely to face the fire, thus bringing his back toward Cooly.

"I certainly will look out for Sadie," smiled the Wellsburg boy. "You may depend on me to bring her back safely, Mrs. Hewett."

"I'll be down in a moment, Jack," said the girl, as she flitted from the room.

The deacon sat in grim silence, glaring at the fire, while his wife chatted in a friendly fashion with Jack Cooly. The woman made Jack feel that she trusted him and was pleased to have Sadie escorted to the party by a boy of his character. At the same time, she did not flatter him, and, with womanly tact, she refrained from saying too much on this point. She asked him about school and showed interest in what he had to tell her.

Sadie came down, bringing her wraps.

"You'll have to help me fold these wings under my coat, Jack," she laughed. "I can't put it on alone without crushing them."

Jack's eyes twinkled as he quickly surveyed her.

"Your costume is splendid, Sadie," he said. "You look like a real fairy."

"Huah!" grunted the deacon, and spat sizzlingly into the fire.

When Sadie was ready Mrs. Hewett accompanied the two to the door and saw them off. Returning, she stood regarding her husband a few moments.

"I did hope you wouldn't act like a boor before a stranger, Elnathan," she finally said, picking up her knitting-work and resuming her seat.

He flung himself round in his chair.

"You've had your way, woman!" he sourly exclaimed. "I hope you're satisfied! Don't blame me if the gal is ruined by frivolous idees. I'll hold myself blameless, no matter what she comes to. The spirit of Satan is abroad in this town. There never used to be no masked parties and sech goin's on in Bloomfield before this Merriwell came here and started his school. Seems as if the people of Bloomfield, beginning with the boys and gals and goin' right up through their elders clean to old Eb Small, is gittin' worldly, and sinful, and wicked. If it keeps on, there's no tellin' where it will stop."

"The trouble was, Elnathan, that this town was dead—the older folks was dried up and stiff and outer date in everything they done. The young folks was gittin' the same way. As a result, all our boys and gals took to leavin' home and goin' away to livelier places jest as soon as they could. There wasn't nuthin' to keep them here. It ain't natteral for boys and gals to be sober, and stiff, and prim, and never enjoy themselves none at all. For the last ten years Bloomfield has been like one continuous funeral. It's jest beginnin' to wake up. Mebbe Frank Merriwell is responsible for the wakin' up. Mebbe he has brought in some up-to-date idees. It'll be a good thing for the town if he has. It'll give it some life and spirit."

"Spirit of Satan! spirit of Satan!" rasped Elnathan. "It's in the town! It's in my family! It's everywhere here'bouts, and that feller is responsible!"

CHAPTER III.

THE CAVALIER AND THE SAILORS.

That night a few of the staid old citizens of Bloomfield, who happened to be passing that way, paused in surprise in front of Robert Gladleigh's home. The house was lighted from top to bottom, and from within came the merry sound of youthful voices, mingling with music and laughter. Boys and girls came by couples and by fours and were admitted, with shouts of welcome. The staid old villagers shook their heads and moved on wonderingly.

Jack Cooly was wearing the costume of a darky minstrel man beneath his long overcoat, and he adjusted a negro mask to his face ere reaching the Gladleigh house. Jack and Sadie were welcomed heartily by a group of maskers the moment they entered. A shepherdess, with a crook in her hand, grasped Sadie at once and whisked her away.

"Sadie, I'm so glad you've come!" whispered the shepherdess. "I've been watching for you."

"You mean you're glad Jack has come," laughed Sadie. "But you never said a word to him."

"Of course I didn't. I want him to find me out. I'm not going to tell him how I'm dressed. I have two of the boys who'll look after him and tell him where to put his overcoat and things. Come right up to my room, Sadie."

As they ascended the stairs they caught a glimpse of a laughing party gathered round a tall, grotesque figure in the library. The tall fellow was made up like a clown and seemed to be providing amusement for those in his vicinity.

"Who is that?" questioned Sadie.

"I really don't know," confessed Phyllis, "but I think it's one of the boys from Frank Merriwell's school. He's awfully funny. Talks just like a farmer and cracks a lot of stale jokes. Everybody's heard his jokes before, but they laugh at him because he gets them off in such a ridiculous manner. Oh, Sadie, it's just the jolliest crowd! But I do believe they'll turn the house bottom up."

"What does your mother say about it?"

"Oh, mother's all right. I believe she's enjoying it as much as I am. Not five minutes ago I found her on the sofa, with a sailor on each side of her and another sailor doing the hornpipe in front of her. She was laughing like a girl."

As soon as Sadie had removed her wraps and adjusted her wings, they hurried down-stairs again.

At the foot of the stairs stood a lad, made up to represent a Spanish cavalier. He carried a guitar, on which he strummed occasionally. The moment he caught sight of Sadie he cried:

"Behold a fairy from the upper regions! She comes! she comes!"

"Who's that?" asked Sadie.

"You've got me," again confessed Phyllis. "I think he's another of Frank Merriwell's boys."

The cavalier caught Sadie's hand and detained her on the lower stair.

"Queen of Fairyland," he said, "already you have captured my heart."

Then he struck the strings of his guitar and began singing:

"A Spanish cavalier stood in his retreat,
And on his guitar played a tune, dear;
The music so sweet he oft would repeat,
The blessings of my country and you, dear.

Say, darling, say, when I am far away
Sometimes you may think of me, dear;
Bright sunny days will soon fade away,
Remember what I say and be true, dear."

A group of maskers gathered about the foot of the stairs and listened. As the singer finished and again caught Sadie's hand, which he carried to his lips with a gallant air, there was a burst of applause.

Beneath her mask Sadie Hewett was blushing with mingled confusion and displeasure. The forward youth had given her hand a squeeze that somehow seemed to arouse her resentment. Although she knew not why, she had taken an immediate dislike to him.

"Please don't attract so much attention to me," she whispered. "I wish you wouldn't."

"Ah! but she's a modest fairy!" cried the cavalier, heedless of her entreaty. "In these days, it's a remarkable thing to find a modest fairy."

"Let me go!" urged Sadie, as she tried to step down and pass him.

"Not yet, fairest of the fairies. Not yet, queen of my heart," he laughed.

Then Sadie began to lose her temper.

"Will some one please bring some salt to use on this fresh young gentleman?" she half laughed.

"Ahoy, there! Who says salt?" roared a hoarse voice, as a little chap in sailor costume, followed by two others similarly attired, came pushing through the throng. "Here are three salts from the briny deep! If you say so, we'll sprinkle ourselves on the fresh young man."

"Aye, aye, captain!" chorused his two companions. "We'll sprinkle ourselves all over him."

The cavalier shrugged his shoulders and put out a hand against the breast of the little sailor.

"You'd better trim your sails and change your course," he observed. "You're not wanted."

"Well, dash my toplights!" cried the leader of the sailors. "You seem to think you're the skipper of this craft. You've made a mistake, my hearty! I'm the skipper. I'm Captain Bowline, and my orders must be obeyed! Eh, boys?"

"Aye, aye, captain!" chorused his companions.

"My jolly lads," said Bowline, "this foreign party has an idea that he's a warbler. He fancies he can

capture the hearts of the ladies by his nightingale notes. But we can sing a little. Eh, boys?"

"Aye, aye, captain!"

"We'll give them Sally Brown, my hearties," said Bowline. "All ready now. Bear down heavy on the chorus."

Immediately the little fellow struck into a sea chantie, while his two companions, as the chorus, roared away on every other line, which is printed in italics.

"Sally Brown, I love your daughter!"

CHORUS: *Aye, aye, roll and go.*

And for her I'll sail across the water,

I'll spend my money on Sally Brown.

For Sally is a sailor's lassie,

Aye, aye, roll and go.

With sparkling eyes so bright and sassy,

And I'll spend my money on Sally Brown."

This chantie brought a shout of laughter and a round of applause from the maskers. In the laughter and applause, however, the cavalier did not join.

"Sally Brown will have a fine time if they spend all their money on her!" he sneered. "It's probable they'll be able to buy her a whole lemonade."

"Hush! hush!" cried several.

Others shouted:

"Give us more of Sally Brown! Go on! go on!"

The three sailors responded with another verse.

"For seven long years I courted Sally,

Aye, aye, roll and go.

But she called me long and dilly-dally,

While I spent my money on Sally Brown.

Sally Brown she got married to a baker,

Aye, aye, roll and go.

And to New Orleans did the lubber take her,

When I'd spent all my money on Sally Brown."

Beneath his mask the cavalier was green with envy. He was a fellow who loved to pose as the central figure in the lime-light, and the interference of the sailors annoyed and vexed him.

"I always did love a sailor," murmured the fairy. "When all your money is spent on Sally Brown, I'll touch you with my magic wand, and your pockets shall be replenished."

"Avast, there, my hearties!" shouted Bowline. "Do you hear the musical murmur of our fairy queen? We'll stick by the fairy as long as there's a plank beneath us!"

"Aye, aye, captain!" cried his companions.

The little fellow slipped past the cavalier, bowed gallantly before Sadie and offered her his arm. She accepted it, and there was a ripple of laughter at the cavalier's expense as Bowline escorted her away, his faithful sailor companions following after.

Up bobbed the tall clown, crying:

"Conundrum: What makes the Spanish feller feel so bad? Answer: Because he can't feel no worse."

The cavalier pushed the clown aside, at the same time hissing in his ear:

"Get out of the way with your foolishness, Bemis! You make me sick!"

"Call a veterinary surgeon," chuckled the clown. "He's ill. Great Jamaica ginger! he ought to have some of his nerve amputated!"

If Sadie Hewett fancied she would be able to get away from the cavalier thus easily, she soon realized her error, for, wherever she went, he persistently followed her. The moment the sailors abandoned her the Spaniard was on hand again.

"You're wearing the handsomest costume of any girl at this party," he declared, "and I know you must be the prettiest girl here. Why did you turn me down?"

"The perceptions of a fairy are never at fault," she answered. "There's something about you that I don't like."

"Oh, now that's nonsense! How do you know you don't like me? How can you tell?"

"Oh, I know. Why don't you find some other girl and bother her?"

"Never! I'm going to stick by you. I'm going to prove that I'm right and that you're the prettiest girl in this house."

"How are you going to prove it?"

"Oh, we'll unmask by and by. When we have refreshments I want you for my companion. I suppose they'll all unmask then. Will you promise to take refreshments with me?"

"It's too early to promise any one that."

"But I want you to promise before some other fellow gets you."

"I'll consider it."

"That won't do. If I let you go now, you'll quit me."

"I'm going to quit you, anyway. You're altogether too persistent to suit me. Good-by."

Sadie flitted away, and the cavalier promptly followed her.

"Avast, my hearties!" murmured Captain Bowline, calling the attention of his two companions. "Our fairy is in trouble. That Spanish lubber is laying alongside at every opportunity. She doesn't fancy him. We are the natural protectors of all fairies. Let us keep our weather eyes on him."

"Aye, aye, captain!" they muttered in return.

Sadie fled to the parlor, where some one was playing

the piano, and the tall clown was doing a grotesque dance.

A moment later the cavalier was at her elbow. Seeking an opportunity when she fancied she was not observed, Sadie slipped into the hall.

The cavalier caught her there and detained her.

"It's no use," he laughed. "You see I'm going to stick by you."

By this time she was highly indignant.

"I see you are, but I won't have it!"

"Promise me that you'll take refreshments with me, and I'll let you alone."

"I positively decline."

"Then you won't unmask with me?"

"No."

He hesitated a moment, following which he made a sudden move and attempted to lift her mask in order to peer beneath it.

Captain Bowline staggered against him and nearly upset him.

"Steady, there!" cried the little sailor. "We seem to have struck a heavy swell. There's a sea on, and the old ship is rolling."

CHAPTER IV.

CAPTAIN BOWLINE'S PLOT.

"You little rat!" snarled the Spaniard, catching the sailor by the shoulder and giving him a savage shake. "Now you keep away from me after this! I know you, Bob Bubbs, and I won't stand for this business! I've warned you before now that you can't monkey with me!"

"Hello, Hollyberry!" snickered the little chap. "So it's you, is it? You're the grand cavalier who is annoying our fairy. I say, Hollis, it strikes me you're rather impudent. The girl doesn't like you. Why don't you keep away from her? You can't make her fancy you by chasing her around in such a manner."

"I don't want any of your lip!" snapped the chap called Hollis. "If you bother me again, I'll punch your head!"

"He says he'll punch my head, my hearties," laughed the little sailor. "If he does, we'll hang him to the yard-arm."

"Aye, aye, captain!" they cried, in unison.

"Beware, Hollyberry!" warned the boy who had been called Bubbs. "Lift not your aristocratic fist to me. I have a couple of backers, and it's dangerous to punch my head."

In the meantime, Sadie Hewett had fled from the hall and found her friend, Phyllis Gladleigh.

"Oh, Phyllis," she breathed, "that fellow annoys me dreadfully! I don't know what I'm going to do! I can't seem to shake him, and for some reason I just despise him!"

"Oh, you'll have to treat him decently, Sadie."

"If I do that, I'll never get rid of him. Where's Jack?"

"I don't know. I'm waiting for him to find me out. I've seen him four or five times, but he hasn't even noticed me. I believe he's struck on Jennie Walker, for I saw him laughing and talking with her. Well, I don't care if he is. If he unmasks with her, he'll get a shock. She looks rather nice in her costume, but any one knows she's the plainest girl in Bloomfield."

"Oh, look!" breathed Sadie. "There comes that fellow again! He's looking for me! I'd give anything if I could fool him."

"I've an idea," whispered Phyllis swiftly. "It's a shame for you to change your costume. You look like a real fairy. Still, if you are bound to fool him, I know how you can do it. I had an idea that I would rig up to-night in an old woman's dress, just to see if Jack would discover me, but I changed my mind and didn't use the costume. I have it in my room."

"Just the thing! just the thing!" laughed Sadie softly. "Let's steal up to your room, and I'll change into the old woman's costume."

"What a joke it would be if some one else could put on your clothes!" murmured Phyllis.

Once more the three sailors appeared. They seemed to be following the Spaniard and immediately on observing Sadie they pushed past him, and the captain addressed her.

"My lass," he said, "it is not for us to bother you too much, but we see the great hidalgo approaching. Shall we jump on his neck and put him out of business?"

"I want to thank you for what you did in the hall," said Sadie. "Why, the rude fellow would have pulled my mask off if you hadn't bumped into him. Do you know who he is?"

The little chap chuckled.

"I should say we do! He's a very aristocratic young gentleman, who thinks himself all the candy. It surprises him greatly that any girl should not hook onto him at the first proposal."

"Do you know what I'm going to do?" said Sadie. "I'm going to change my costume. I'm going to do it to get away from him. You've been friendly, and I

don't mind if you know what costume I'll change to. I shall dress like an old woman."

"Well, that's an idea," laughed the little fellow. "But I've got another idea. What are you going to do with this costume you're wearing?"

"Nothing."

"I'm just about your height, and I believe I might put it on. Oh, say, wouldn't that be great! If you'll let me have that rig, I'll agree to make the Spanish gent look like thirty cents!"

For a moment the girls were surprised and doubtful. Then the full possibility of the joke dawned upon them, and Sadie gleefully whispered:

"Oh, Phyllis, wouldn't that be jolly! Why can't we do it? I'll change to the old woman's dress, and then he can slip up-stairs to a room where we'll leave these clothes. If he can put them on and make up to look like me, that other impudent fellow will be fooled."

"We can try it," said Phyllis, catching the spirit of the deception.

It was no easy matter to give Fred Hollis the slip, but the girls finally succeeded in doing so. By his actions Hollis betrayed that he was disappointed when he could not find the fairy.

"Hello, Spanish!" called the clown, as he stopped Fred in the midst of a crowded room and drew general attention to him. "You're restless as a flee, ain't ye? You do everything but walk backward. Lobsters do that."

"Why don't you walk backward?" sneered the cavalier.

"Hey? Oh, you're a funny feller, too, ain't ye? Say, folks, this Spanish gent is an old friend of mine. Speakin' 'bout lobsters makes me think of a 'sperience he had t'other day. Went into a restaurant and said, 'Do you serve lobsters here?' Says the waiter, 'Yes; what'll you have?'"

Hollis gave the chuckling clown a push and passed on. A few moments later he caught sight of the shepherdess and made a rush for her.

"Say," he palpitated, "where's your friend?"

"My friend?" she repeated questioningly. "What friend?"

"Why, the fairy."

"I don't know."

"It's funny I can't find her anywhere."

"Perhaps she's vanished as fairies do."

"Oh, I hope not. I wanted to fix it up with her. You see, I suppose I got her a little sore by following

her up so closely; but I couldn't help it—by George! I couldn't help it."

"It must be a bad case," laughed the shepherdess, behind her mask.

"Oh, I'm stuck on her—I admit it. She must be around somewhere."

"Possibly she is. You know fairies have the faculty of transforming themselves in appearance. Now she may have changed herself into something else. Perhaps she's that old woman yonder."

Phyllis indicated a grotesque little figure, made up to represent an aged woman, wearing a cap and leaning on a crooked cane.

"Oh, get out!" exclaimed Hollis. "That isn't she!"

"Are you sure?"

"Of course I am. I'd know my fairy the moment I put my eyes on her."

Phyllis Gladleigh tried to smother a laugh, but did not wholly succeed.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Hollis. "What's the joke?"

"The joke's on you," asserted Phyllis. "You'd better investigate and find out if the old woman isn't really your fairy."

For a moment Hollis' suspicions were aroused.

"By George, I will!" he exclaimed, starting toward the old woman.

But he stopped suddenly, uttering another exclamation that was full of satisfaction, as his eyes discovered a familiar figure in the doorway.

"Ah!" he murmured, turning for a moment toward the shepherdess. "There she is! I'm going to keep track of her after this. Say, I wish you'd help me out. Can't you fix it for me? Tell her I'm not such a bad fellow, if she'll only give me a fair show. Won't you?"

He was temporarily puzzled by the strange sounds which came from behind the mask of the shepherdess. He could not tell whether she was laughing or choking.

"I'll do my best to fix it for you," Phyllis finally gasped. "I hope you catch your fairy, for I really admire your determination and persistency."

"Now that's fine of you," said Hollis. "Speak to her now, won't you? Please do!"

"All right."

Watching, he saw the shepherdess join the fairy and talk with her earnestly for a few minutes. During this conversation the fairy frequently glanced in Hollis' direction. At first she shook her head in a determined manner, but the shepherdess seemed pleading with her,

and after a time she appeared to listen and betray less obstinacy.

"I don't know who you are, my little shepherdess," muttered Hollis; "but, if you do fix it up for me, I won't forget you."

Finally the clown pranced up to the two girls outside the doorway and made a comical bow.

"Stop wasting all this goo-goo on each other!" he cried. "Is it possible you ain't seen me?"

Now it happened that Phyllis Gladleigh was vexed and exasperated with Jack Cooly because he had failed to penetrate her disguise and pick her out amid the maskers. At this moment Cooly was cooing into the ear of a girl in a scarlet dress. They were sitting close together on a tête-à-tête. Phyllis flashed them a glance and then turned to the clown.

"Why, dear me!" she laughed, "I haven't noticed you before. How did you get here?"

"Oh, they couldn't keep me to hum," chuckled the clown. "My folks locked me up in the house and fastened all the winders, but I jest climbed up the chimney and flue. Ho! ho! ho!"

"Oh, what a bad pun!" exclaimed Phyllis. "Well, anyhow, I'm glad you came. Are you going to take me for a partner when refreshments are served?"

The clown seemed to lose his breath momentarily.

"Be I?" he finally cried. "Well, you won't have to ask me again! Speaking 'bout refreshments makes me think how I fed a hungry dog to-day. I gave him a piece of meat to eat off my hand. He didn't eat off my whole hand, but he came near biting off four of my fingers."

The shepherdess took the clown's arm, and they strolled away together. A moment later the cavalier was bowing before the fairy, who seemed somewhat startled.

"Don't run away again, little Queen of Fairyland," he breathed. "I want to apologize. I'm sorry if I've annoyed you, but it's your own fault. You shouldn't be so fascinating."

Still she seemed hesitating, as if on the point of turning away.

"Won't you accept my apology?" he entreated. "You know I didn't really mean any harm."

"I don't suppose you did," murmured the fairy, in a half whisper; "but you were altogether too forward and persistent. Fairies are easily frightened, you know."

Fred's heart leaped with encouragement.

"It's the forward and persistent fellow who captures the ordinary girl," he said.

"But I'm not an ordinary girl, thank you!"

"That's right, you are not. I should have realized that in the first place. If you'll give me a fair show, I think I can set myself right with you. Won't you accept my arm?"

"Oh, I don't know. I ought not to do so. Still, perhaps fairies are like ordinary girls after all—perhaps they like the persistent fellows."

Fred felt that his triumph was complete when the hand of the fairy rested lightly on his arm.

"Let's sit on the sofa yonder, beside that old woman," he invited. "We'll have a nice cozy little chat."

As he escorted her toward the sofa he was inwardly saying:

"She's like all the rest. They run away at first, but they surrender if you keep after them long enough. I've got her now!"

CHAPTER V.

THE QUARREL.

Barely were the cavalier and the fairy seated on the sofa when the minstrel abandoned the girl in scarlet and hastened over to them.

"Excuse me," he said, nodding to Hollis. "Just a word with your friend."

Instantly Hollis became alarmed and placed himself on the defensive.

"Chase yourself!" he exclaimed. "Don't butt in!"

Cooly gave an excellent imitation of a negro-minstrel laugh.

"Yah! yah! yah!" he cried. "Dis gemman is afeard Ah'll steal his lady. Ah allus was a takin' nigger."

The fairy cuddled closer to Hollis.

"Protect me from him," she murmured.

"Oh, I'll protect you from him all right," declared Fred, slipping an arm about her waist.

"Don't be frightened," said Cooly, in a low tone. "I don't want to steal her; I want to ask her a question."

"Go ahead and ask it," said Hollis.

Cooly dropped on his knee and seized the fairy's hand, lifting it to the lips of his mask.

"Here! here!" growled Hollis. "You don't have to go through that performance! You're attracting general attention."

Without heeding him, Cooly said:

"Sadie, I can't get track of Phyllis anywhere. I thought I had her a moment ago, but I found out my mistake. Where is she? How is she dressed?"

The fairy laughed.

"You wish me to reveal her to you. If Phyllis knew how you had failed, she wouldn't be flattered."

"I know that. For goodness' sake, don't tell her! Just give me the tip, and I'll put up a bluff that I've discovered her of my own accord."

"What would ordinary mortals do without the aid of fairies? If you would find the fair Phyllis, search for her amid her flocks."

"Amid her flocks?" muttered the Wellsburg boy. "Amid her flocks? Now what do you mean by that? By Jove! I have it! What a fool I've been! She's the shepherdess!"

Instantly he sprang up and rushed away.

In another room he found the clown and shepherdess very much absorbed in each other.

"At last!" he exclaimed; "at last I've found you!"

"Go away!" cried the clown. "My goodness, it's getting dark around here!"

Phyllis regarded Cooly with indifferent eyes.

"What do you want?" she asked. "Can't you see I'm very busy?"

"Yes, we're both all-fired busy," chuckled the clown. "Go stand on your head in the corner."

But Cooly was not to be rebuffed.

"Oh, shake that fellow, Phyllis!" he exclaimed. "I've found you!"

"You've been long enough about it!" she retorted, with a touch of spite. "Where's your friend of the scarlet dress?"

"Oh, I don't know."

"You should know. You've been attentive enough." "But I thought—I thought it was you, Phyllis."

"Why didn't you keep on thinking so?"

"I got a peep beneath her mask."

"Well, I like that!" cuttingly laughed the girl. "Oh, you can't fool me! You took a fancy to her until you got a peep beneath her mask. It didn't take you long to find me after you did that."

"And I guess that will hold you for awhile!" hummed the clown.

Cooley began to get warm.

"You might have given me a hint!" he exclaimed. "I fancied you would."

"Oh, you did? Well, you made a mistake. I have other friends who are not so dull."

"Behold one of them," said the clown. "I'm one of her flock. I'm a tender little lamb, and she must care for me. Skidoo!"

"Oh, I see how it is!" burst from Cooley, as he

straightened up. "You have some one you prefer to me. Well, I admire your taste!"

"So do I," chuckled the clown. "You're twenty minutes late, my friend. Conundrum: Why is the Shepherdess like fly-paper? Answer: Because I'm stuck on her."

"You're a brilliant chap!" sneered Cooley. "You must have been studying Joe Miller's Joke Book. All your cracks are about a thousand years old."

"Oh, I don't know!" was the retort. "I can give you a crack that won't be more than a second old."

As he said this the clown took a meditative look at his clenched fist.

Cooley grew warm.

"Come, Phyllis," he urged, "shake this chump. You're going to unmask with me."

"Smoke up and dream again!" advised the clown. "Have another pill!"

An instant later Cooley snapped the mask from the clown's face.

"I want to see what sort of a fascinating chap this is!" he sneered.

Hiram Bemis rose to his full height, and only the prompt action of Phyllis Gladleigh prevented him from striking Cooley. Phyllis sprang between them, entreating them both to desist.

"Oh, don't, don't, boys!" she begged. "Remember you're in my home."

"All right," drawled Bemis, "I'll remember it; but I'll see that feller some other time."

"Any time and anywhere you choose," flung back Jack.

"You've yanked off my mask," said Hi. "You've seen who I am. Now, why don't you have nerve enough to let me take a look at you?"

"Go ahead!" grated the Wellsburg boy, as he quickly removed his own mask. "Look all you choose!"

The two lads stood glaring at each other, an expression of hatred on their faces.

"I can't say that I admire your taste, Phyllis!" sneered Cooley.

"I can't say that I admire your taste in choosing the girl in the scarlet dress!" exclaimed Phyllis. "Jack, I'm ashamed of you! I didn't think you would behave like this."

"It's not my fault," he muttered. "I suppose this is one of those great athletes from Frank Merriwell's school. Ha! ha! ha! A fine bunch of athletes Merriwell has! Why, the Wellsburg Grammar-school boys could defeat them at anything!"

"You're having another pipe-dream," said Hiram.

"When we fellers git into gear we'll show you Wellsburg chaps a thing or two! We'll take some of the conceit out of you, by gosh!"

"Oh, we wouldn't recognize such a lot of hoodlums!" retorted Cooly. "We wouldn't have anything to do with you!"

"You wouldn't dare! That's what's the matter, you wouldn't dare! When we git ready we're goin' to challenge you chaps."

"Challenge away!"

"We'll print our challenge in the Wellsburg *Herald*. If you don't give us a show at ye, we'll make you look mighty cheap."

"If we ever do give you a show, you'll look mighty cheap!"

"Stop this, both of you!" commanded Phyllis. "If you want to discuss things of this sort, do it somewhere else and at another time."

Cooly shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll not waste my breath discussing anything with a common clown," he said. "This fellow didn't have to put on a mask to play the clown. He's more of a clown without a mask than he is with one."

Phyllis Gladleigh was exasperated.

"I didn't think it of you, Jack!" she cried resentfully. "I always thought you a gentleman."

"There are times," he retorted, "when a gentleman has to stoop to deal with those beneath him."

"Now I'm pretty good-natured," said Bemis, "but I've certainly stood just about all of this I can. If you're going to keep it up, we'd better go outside somewhere."

"You shall not!" declared Phyllis. "If you were to do anything like that, the whole of Bloomfield would hear of it. This town will talk enough about the party to-night. If you boys indulge in fighting, it will give them some real cause to talk. I want you both to promise me that you'll do nothing of the sort to-night."

She placed her hand on Hiram's arm.

"Certainly I'll promise," he bowed. "I'll promise anything you ask."

Cooly threw back his head and laughed.

"He's eager to make such a promise!" sneered the Wellsburg boy. "That lets him out. Of course, he isn't afraid, or anything of that sort!"

"Mebbe you'll find out some time whether I'm afraid or not!" growled Hiram.

"You haven't given me your promise, Jack," reminded Phyllis.

"Shake this fellow, and I'll promise you not to pick a quarrel with him to-night."

"If you're not gentleman enough to give me the promise anyhow, I wouldn't think of shaking him!" she exclaimed defiantly. "I must say that I admire his conduct far more than I do yours."

"Then stick to him!" snarled Cooly, turning away; "stick to him, and you'll be sorry!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNMASKING.

In the meantime, Fred Hollis had been progressing with his fairy to an extent that astonished him. He was encouraged by the manner in which she cuddled up to him, and he failed to note that the old lady on the couch was inclined to have spasms of giggling, which frequently changed into coughing fits.

"So your name is Sadie?" murmured Fred. "I think that's a lovely name."

"Oh, do you?" she murmured, in return. "Won't you tell me your name?"

"My name is Fred."

"Fred? Oh, I always liked that name! You're not Spanish, of course?"

"Oh, no, I'm not Spanish, I'm not French, I'm not German. Now, what would you take me for?"

"I wouldn't take you for a gift."

The old lady had another spasm.

"Eh?" exclaimed Hollis. "What did you say—you wouldn't take me for a gift?"

The fairy giggled coyly.

"No, I'd much rather you'd take me. Now, what would you take me for?"

"For better or worse," answered Fred.

"Oh, you are so bold!"

"But you know you rather like my boldness after all."

"You did frighten me awfully at first."

"And the more you ran away the more determined I was to pursue. One of Merriwell's precepts is that perseverance conquers all things."

"I suppose that's right. I did think you were an awful forward fellow, but, after all, I like you so well that it surprises me."

"Won't you let me have a peep beneath your mask, Sadie?"

"Oh, no, no, not now! You know we'll unmask by and by."

"Will you unmask with me?"

"If you wish me to very, very much."

"I do. I shall be devoured with eagerness to see your face. I'll wager that you're the prettiest girl at this party."

"I'm not a girl; I'm a fairy. You know fairies are awfully deceptive. They are so changeable. They can change into almost anything they like. Now, if I took a fancy, I could change into a boy this minute."

"Don't!" exclaimed Hollis, with pretended horror.

"You wouldn't like me if I were a boy?"

"I should despise you!"

The old woman had a severe coughing spell.

"Tell me about your school. You know I've been away from Bloomfield. Of course, I've heard many things about it, but people did not seem to agree. Some thought it was a fine school, while others were inclined to ridicule it."

"Oh, it's not a school, you know, although Merriwell calls it that. I never saw such a collection of freaks in my life. I can't bear most of the fellows. There's something the matter with them all. If Mr. Merriwell really builds that bunch up and makes them strong and healthy, he'll produce a marvel."

"Don't you have any friends or chums?"

"Oh, no real chums. I couldn't chum with those fellows. There's a lot of them here to-night. I'm dead sore on some of them."

"Any one in particular?"

"Well, there's that little rat, Bob Bubbs. I certainly despise him!"

"Bob Bubbs? What sort of a fellow is he?"

"Oh, he thinks he's smart. He's always playing practical jokes. If he ever plays one on me, I'll fix him!"

"Dear me! I should hate to get you down on me, Fred. You must be very dangerous when you get down on a chap."

"I am. But there's no danger that Bubbs will ever try any of his tricks on me. I've warned him. I've told him I'd shake him out of his skin if he did. I don't believe he could fool me, anyhow."

"I don't believe he'd dare try it," murmured the fairy. "You say he is a little fellow?"

"Yes."

"Is he here to-night?"

"Oh, yes."

"How's he dressed?"

"Why, he was one of those three sailors. He tried to get fresh with me, but I haven't seen him lately. He found out I was onto him and took a sneak."

At this juncture two of the sailors came rolling up and paused in front of the sofa.

"Avast, there, my Spanish tar!" roared one of them. "Have you clapped your binnacle lights on Captain Bowline lately?"

Said the other:

"We've cruised this coast from Hatteras to Eastport, and we can't find a trace of the captain."

"Go on about your business!" advised Hollis. "I don't know where he is, and I don't want to!"

"That's right," murmured the fairy, "send them away. I don't like them. If I were a boy, I wouldn't have anything to do with such rude fellows."

Not a little to the surprise of Hollis, she slipped her arm about his neck and clung to him as if in real alarm.

"Oh, don't worry about them," he said. "Just you stick by me, and no one will bother you."

"I'll stick by you," she declared, permitting her fingers to wander through his hair. "What a splendid head you have! I should say you have a brain that is almost human."

At this the sailors uttered a roar of laughter and slapped their knees, while Hollis felt his face burning beneath his mask.

The old lady nearly fell off the end of the sofa.

"Don't!" whispered Fred. "You're attracting every one's attention. They're all watching us."

"What do you care?" giggled the fairy. "You shouldn't mind, as long as you have me. Let them watch. I can stand it if you can."

"You've got her, my hearty!" cried one of the sailors; "you've got her tight and fast! You'd better take her for your first mate."

"Go on about your business, I tell you!" grated Hollis. "Don't hold me so tight, Sadie."

The fairy seemed offended.

"That's always the way," she said. "A fellow chases a girl until he gets her, and then he wants to shake her."

"But I don't want to shake you, only I hate to have every one looking and laughing. Let's get out of this room."

But "Sadie" objected.

"I'm going to stay right here," she said. "I think it's real mean of them to laugh. I don't like to have people laugh at me, do you?"

"I should say not! If there's anything that makes me mad, it is to be laughed at."

Hollis grew more and more uneasy, for he perceived that they had attracted the attention of all the maskers, and he realized the boys and girls were making comments about them.

The clown and the shepherdess returned to the room in company. They paused in front of the couch, and the clown regarded Hollis intently.

"Conundrum," he cried. "What's the best thing to tell a girl? Answer: Nothing, for then she can't tell it to no one else."

"That fellow certainly makes me sick!" growled Hollis. "I suppose he thinks he's funny."

"I'm not half as funny as some one else," chuckled the clown.

At this point Mrs. Gladleigh appeared and announced that refreshments were ready. She invited the young people to select partners and proceed to the dining-room.

Hollis started to get up.

"Oh, you can't shake me now!" exclaimed his companion, as she clung to him.

The two sailors seemed rather slow about finding partners, with the result that, when all were paired off, they discovered the only girl remaining was the one disguised in the old lady's costume. Immediately the jolly tars rolled up to her, hitched their trousers and bowed profoundly as each offered her an arm.

"Will you ship with us for this voyage?" they asked.

Laughingly she rose, and they bore her away between them.

"Oh, do let's get close to the cavalier and the fairy!" she whispered. "There's going to be a surprise pretty soon. It'll be lots of fun."

"Put over your helm, Marlinspike," said one of the sailors. "We'll lay alongside the cavalier and the fairy."

"Aye, aye, Jibboom!" answered Marlinspike. "Over she goes, and we'll drop anchor beside the cavalier and the fairy."

The immense dining-room was crowded as the maskers gathered about the long table, on which the refreshments were spread.

Mrs. Gladleigh stood at the head of the table and made a little speech, in which she said that she hoped every one had enjoyed the occasion, ending by saying that, as it would be impossible for them to partake of the refreshments while in disguise, the time had come for them to unmask.

There was a great deal of laughing as the boys and girls removed their masks. Fred Hollis took his off and dropped it on the floor. Of course, there were many exclamations of surprise as the faces of the maskers were exposed. Hollis turned to his companion and found her still fumbling at her mask.

"Avast, there, you lubber!" cried Tommy Chuckle-

son, who proved to be one of the two sailors. "Why don't you assist the lady?"

"Can I help you?" asked Fred. "Let me remove it."

He removed the mask easily and then started back, with an exclamation of amazement, for the grinning face of Bob Bubbs was exposed to view.

CHAPTER VII.

CROSS-PURPOSES AND TROUBLED HEARTS.

The entire party seemed to be watching for this dénouement, and there was a great shout of laughter.

"Hello, Freddy, my boy!" chuckled Bubbs, good-naturedly. "Say, haven't we been having a jolly time! Say, hasn't it been great sport!"

Hollis was crimson and unable to speak. In his heart there was a feeling of shame and rage, which seemed to benumb him from his head to his heels.

"Ahoy, there, my Spanish tar!" cried Tommy Chuckleson. "The joke is on you. How do you like your fairy now?"

"I told you it was possible the fairy queen had turned into that old woman," said Phyllis Gladleigh. "There she is. Your sailor friends have her between them."

Sadie Hewett's beautiful teeth were gleaming as she laughed.

Hollis looked at her and was instantly struck by the conviction that he had made no mistake in thinking the fairy must be the prettiest girl at the party. But he had been tricked—basely deceived. They had plotted against him. They had put up a joke on him and made him ridiculous.

He saw how the trick had been worked, but he hated himself because he had failed to penetrate the deception. Thinking of it now, he recalled the fact that there had seemed to be a remarkable change in the fairy after she surrendered to his attentions. But Bubbs was a clever actor—he had proved himself clever on previous occasions. The costume of the fairy had fitted him very well, and he had played his part deftly enough to deceive Hollis up to the time of the unmasking.

Remembering how the "fairy" had cuddled up to him on the sofa, attracting general attention, while the "old woman" sat on the other side of him and giggled in a most perplexing manner, Fred grew more and more infuriated. It seemed that his heart would burst in his bosom. The faces before him began to swim in a hazy mist. The voice of Bubbs aroused him and caused him to stiffen up.

"Better laugh, Hollis, old chap," chuckled Bob.

"That's the best way to take it. Show them you can stand a little joke. Make them think you really enjoyed it, after all."

"See here," grated Fred, turning fiercely on the joker, "I'm going to tell you something I know!"

"Go ahead," invited Bob. "It won't take you long."

"Great Jamaica ginger!" cried Hiram Bemis. "Hollis looks jest the same as I did the time I had the earache in my stomach."

"The earache in your stomach?" laughed Tommy Chuckleson. "How could you have the earache in your stomach, Hi?"

"Why, that was easy. You see I et fourteen ears of green corn, and it gave me the earache in my stomach."

Bubbs shook his fist at the tall chap.

"You stop it, Hi—you stop it!" he cried. "I'm the only one who's supposed to say things like that. My goodness, children, isn't Hi thin! He reminds me of a mule my dad owned once on a time. That mule was so thin we had to tie a knot in his tail to keep him from slipping through his collar."

For the time, being attention seemed to be diverted from Hollis, greatly to his satisfaction and relief.

Jack Cooly's partner was the girl in scarlet. On removing her mask, she proved to be very plain, with a generous spattering of freckles and a saucy pug-nose. Still, there was something attractive about her, and Jack was giving her a great deal of attention, seemingly having forgotten Phyllis Gladleigh.

Phyllis and a few of her friends now took pains to see that every one secured refreshments. It was an informal affair, and all were supposed to help themselves, the boys looking out for their partners. There was a great chattering and much laughing over the surprises the unmasking had created.

Fred Hollis managed to brace up in an endeavor to appear unconcerned, although the flush had left his face and he was very pale, while his hands trembled a little in spite of himself. When he tried to partake of the ice-cream he was surprised to find that it tasted bitter in his mouth. At first he suspected that this was a further continuation of the joke, but after a few moments he realized that the cream was all right and its unusual taste came from his own condition. He forced himself to swallow a little of it, inwardly resolving to escape from the party and the house at the first opportunity when he could do so unobserved.

He would not leave, however, until he had expressed himself to Bubbs. Seizing an occasion when the

others were unobservant, he grasped Bob's shoulder and whispered in his ear:

"You remember what I told you, you little snipe! I said I'd break your neck if you ever made me ridiculous, and I'll keep my word!"

"Wait until I take out a life-insurance," grinned the little fellow, who seemed not a whit disturbed. "Anyhow, let me get this rig off. I should hate to be found with a broken neck in this outfit."

"Oh, you think I'm bluffing," muttered Hollis, "but you'll find I'm not!"

Bubbs slipped away a few moments later and hastened up-stairs to change his clothes. As soon as possible, he reappeared in the costume of Captain Bowline, and was heartily greeted by his two companions, Chuckleson and Jones.

"Welcome back from fairy-land, old tar!" cried Jones, wagging his heavy head. "You've cut up enough didoes for one night."

"Children, behold the fairy again transformed," said Tommy Chuckleson, slapping Bob on the shoulder. "Now, if the original fairy will cast off her years and cease to be an old woman, we'll all be satisfied."

"All but Hollis," grinned Hiram Bemis. "Say, Fred, you'll have to buy lemonade for the whole school."

"All right," said Hollis, trying hard to smile, "I'll do it, fellows."

"Now, that's the talk!" exclaimed several. "We've had our racket; let's not have any hard feelings."

Phyllis Gladleigh was watching Jack Cooly and Jennie Walker. In spite of herself, she could not help glancing in their direction occasionally, and she was dismayed to observe that apparently Cooly had quite forgotten her existence. For all of Jack's hot temper she liked him very much indeed, and the thought that possibly he was becoming genuinely interested in the girl with the freckles was quite enough to make her regret the manner in which she had treated him.

After refreshments the party gathered in another room, where they played games for awhile and became very well acquainted with one another. Finally some of them were compelled to depart. Phyllis was bidding two or three of the girls good night when Jennie Walker found her at the door and announced that she was likewise going home.

"I've had a perfectly lovely time, Phyllis," said Jennie. "I think your party was a grand success."

"I'm glad you've had a good time," declared Phyllis, bravely endeavoring to repress the slightest show of resentment. "This is the first masked party we've had

in Bloomfield, and now that we've had one I hope there will be others."

"Oh, so do I!" cried Jennie. "I'm going to give one myself if mama will let me. I promised Jack—Mr. Cooly—that I would. He urged me to, you know."

"Did he? I hope you like him."

"I think he's a very nice fellow, Phyllis. There are not many fellows like him in Bloomfield. He's so obliging, too. You know my brother brought me over here to-night. He couldn't stay to the party, and so Jack is going to take me home."

Phyllis gave a little gasp.

"Mr. Cooly is very gallant," she said, still endeavoring to restrain her feelings. "But wasn't your brother coming for you?"

"Oh, I suppose he'd come if I waited for him," answered Jennie; "but he'll be glad enough to get out of it. You know how brothers are. They always groan and make a lot of fuss when they have to look after their sisters."

"You'll find your wraps in my room, dear," said Phyllis sweetly. "I'll have to remain here in case any one else thinks of leaving so early."

Jennie ran lightly up the stairs, and ten seconds later Phyllis Gladleigh had Jack Cooly cornered.

"I want to know what you mean!" she exclaimed hoarsely.

"By Jove!" laughed Jack. "What's the matter, Phyllis?"

"You know what the matter is!"

"You'll have to enlighten me. What are you talk-about, Phyllis?"

"You're going home with Jennie Walker! She told me so."

"Oh, yes! she's a very interesting girl."

For a moment words of spite trembled on Phyllis Gladleigh's tongue, but again she mastered herself and held them in check.

"Yes," she admitted, "Jennie is interesting. I don't deny that. But you came over here from Wellsburg to see me. I invited you to attend my party."

"That's right," confessed Cooly, "but after I got here I found you so interested in that Bemis chap that I was quite out in the cold. You gave me the throw down, Phyllis."

"Oh, you know why I did that. I was angry. I don't care a snap for Hiram Bemis. He's just a tall, comical, good-natured boy, and I stuck by him because I was angry to think you didn't find me out sooner. Besides that, you acted decidedly boorish toward Bemis. You weren't a bit polite and gentlemanly."

"Perhaps that's right," admitted Cooly; "but he tried to get gay with me, and I'm going to shake him up a little the first time I meet him alone."

"You're as bad as Fred Hollis. You can't seem to take a joke, Jack."

"There are jokes and jokes," nodded the Wellsburg lad. "A fellow can stand for some of them, and others he won't stand for."

"But you brought Sadie Hewett here to-night at my request. You must see her home."

"I'll be back in time for that."

Phyllis stamped her foot.

"I don't want you to take Jennie Walker home!" she panted. "Please, Jack, don't do it!"

He shook his head.

"It's too late now, Phyllis," he said soberly. "I've asked her. I couldn't go back on her now. You wouldn't have me do that. Here she comes."

Jennie was descending the stairs.

"All ready, Miss Walker," said Cooly, as he hastily slipped into his overcoat and found his hat.

"You'd better button that coat, Jack," advised Jennie. "It's dreadfully cold to-night. Good night, Phyllis. Perfectly splendid time. I'll see you again before you go back to school."

"Yes, do, dear," urged Phyllis, with the utmost politeness, as she smiled on Jennie. "Now don't forget—don't fail."

It is needless to say that Cooly was filled with mingled bewilderment and admiration for Phyllis' nerve, for she kissed Jennie Walker good night in the friendliest fashion.

But, when the door had closed behind Jack and Jennie, Phyllis fled up the stairs to her room.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW PARTNERS.

"I won't cry—I won't!" exclaimed Phyllis, as she rushed into her room.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Sadie Hewett, looking out from behind a screen, where she was changing from the old woman's garments to the fairy costume; "what's the matter, Phyllis?"

"Is that you, Sadie? Everything is the matter! Oh, I hate Jack Cooly—I hate him!"

"No, you don't. You may think you do just now, but you don't hate him, Phyllis."

"I do! I do! Do you know what he's done? I think he's the meanest fellow in the world! He's taken Jennie Walker home."

"Good gracious!" cried Sadie, in surprise. "How about me?"

"Oh, he is coming back to see you home."

"Well, I don't know about that. There are other boys here."

"That's right!" Phyllis palpitated. "That's a splendid idea. You must show him. He seems to think he can do anything he likes. I'll never speak to him again after this evening!"

Sadie could not repress a smile.

"Oh, yes, you will," she nodded roughly. "You'll make it all up."

"Never! never! never! I hate Jennie Walker, too!"

She called him Jack and told me what a splendid fellow he was. She knew she was making me sore. Anyhow, she tried to make me feel badly, but I don't believe I gave her much satisfaction. I felt just like calling her freckled and pug-nosed, but I didn't."

"Jack promised mother that he'd bring me home," said Sadie.

"And, if he doesn't, he'll break his promise. Sadie, we've got to fix it somehow. I don't want to hurry you, but I do wish you'd go home before he gets back. Then I'll have a chance to say something to him. I'll call his attention to the fact that I asked him to bring you here and take you home, and he ran off with another girl and failed to do it. That ought to make him feel mean enough."

"I don't believe he cares for Jennie Walker, Phyllis. Jennie doesn't seem to be his style at all."

"That doesn't make any difference. He pretended to care, and he took her home."

"Weren't you at all to blame for it?"

"I'd like to know how!"

"You seemed to be having a lovely time with Hiram Bemis."

"Hiram Bemis!" breathed Phyllis, with great scorn. "Now any one in the world ought to know that he isn't the sort of fellow I like! I wouldn't get stuck on a tall, thin, awkward chap like that. I gave him lots of attention just because I was provoked to think that Jack didn't find me sooner."

"And that caused all the trouble," declared Sadie. "There's lots of trouble to-night. I was thinking about asking Jack to take me home right away, for, don't you know, Fred Hollis is still annoying me?"

"What, after all this?"

"Yes. He found a chance to speak to me alone, and he insisted that I should let him take me home. He said it would be the only way in which I could make up for the joke on him. If I let him take me home, he'd be triumphant after all, and that would turn the laugh on Bob Bubbs. If the fellows tried to guy him about how he was fooled, he could boast that he succeeded, anyhow. I believe he's watching for me to come down-stairs."

"Well, why don't you let him take you home?" suggested Phyllis.

"Well, I like that!" cried Sadie, in a tone of voice that plainly indicated she did *not* like it. "I tell you I can't bear him! I'll go home alone before I'll let him escort me!"

The girls were still talking of this matter when Sadie completed dressing and they left the room.

"Don't be foolish, Sadie," urged Phyllis. "You can't go home alone. If you won't accept Fred Hollis, you'll have to wait for Jack."

"Oh, not a bit of it!" cried a merry voice. "Captain Bowline is here and he offers his services. Excuse me, girls, but I left my watch in the room where I changed my clothes, and I had to come up for it. What's this about Miss Hewett going home alone? I'm a faithful watch-dog, and the boys call me Towser. I'll see

her to her domicile, and I'll bite any one who tries to steal her from me. Bow-wow!"

"There's your chance, Sadie," breathed Phyllis. "You're so kind, Mr. Bubbs."

"Don't do it!" exclaimed Bob. "That Mister came near knocking me down. I'm Bob, or Towser, or Bubbs, or any old thing but Mister. Am I to have the pleasure of escorting Miss Hewett to the safety of her fireside?"

"Thank you," smiled Sadie, "you are very kind."

"Not kind, but lucky," laughed the little chap. "You know the old saying, 'A fool for luck.'"

At the foot of the stairs they found a fat girl, Mattie Given, who was laboriously endeavoring to get her feet into a pair of overshoes.

"Not going, are you, Mattie?"

"Oh, my gracious, yes! I'm going if I ever get these overshoes on," answered Mattie. "Sakes alive! I'm so thin I know I'll blow away. I've been taking anti-fat, you know, and it's reduced me to this delicate condition. No wonder I can't catch a fellow; they never see me in a crowd."

Hiram Bemis bobbed up at this moment and expressed his pleasure on again finding Phyllis.

"You're just the fellow!" exclaimed Phyllis. "Get busy, Mr. Bemis, and help Mattie put those overshoes on. She's talking about going home alone, but you'll see her home."

"Will I?" gasped Hiram.

"Of course you will," said Mattie promptly. "We'll make a splendid couple. You're the first fellow I've had to-night. Somebody dragged me into the dining-room, but he shook me as soon as we got there."

Hiram's breath was taken away, and, before he knew it, he was on his knees, adjusting the overshoes to the fat girl's feet.

"We'll go along together, the four of us, Hi," said Bob Bubbs. "Get a move on you before Fred Hollis heaves in sight. He's threatened to break my neck, and I'm afraid he'll make good if he catches me now."

Hiram was an obliging fellow, and he helped the fat girl on with her wraps, plunged into his own overcoat, and followed Bob and Sadie, Phyllis bidding them good night at the door.

"I wish you were taller," said Mattie, as she reached up to get hold of Hiram's arm. "You're so short I have to stoop."

"Mebbe I'll grow if I keep on," chuckled Bemis. "Say, I thought I had a mash on Phyllis Gladleigh. Gee whiz! she kinder turned me over to you before I knew what she was doing."

"Wait a minute," said Mattie, "if you're going to cry, I'll lend you my handkerchief."

"I'm not going to cry," declared the tall boy; "but things do come out funny sometimes, don't they? I say, Bubbs, do we go your way?"

"Ask the girls," said Bob. "I don't know."

"Yes," said Sadie, "Mattie lives three houses beyond mine. Oh, what a queer evening it has been! I certainly did have a good time, especially while I was sit-

ting on that sofa and taking in the fun. I didn't think you could fool Fred Hollis that way, Mr. Bubbs."

Bob staggered and clutched at his heart.

"There it is again!" he gasped. "One more Mister will finish me! Call me Bob before I perish."

"Bob," she laughed.

"Say," whispered Hiram, "they're gittin' thick, ain't they? You can call me Hi for short. What do I call you?"

"Mattie is my given name," laughed the fat girl. "That's it, Mattie Given. If I call you Hi for short, you may call me Mattie for as long as you please."

"Gee whillikins!" exploded Hiram. "You can talk pretty fast, can't you? I didn't know how to take you when you mittened onto me so sudden."

"I saw you did not know how to take me, and I was determined you should take me, anyhow."

"Great Jamaica ginger! I've been trying to crack jokes all the evening, and you can crack 'em every time you speak. I found all mine in the almanac. Where did you find yours?"

"You're the biggest joke I've found this evening."

In the meantime, Fred Hollis was vainly looking around for Sadie Hewett. After awhile, failing in his search, he questioned Phyllis Gladleigh.

"Oh, Sadie's gone long ago," said Phyllis.

"Gone?" cried Fred, in dismay.

"Certainly."

"But I didn't see her go."

"Then it's evident that you are left again," laughed Phyllis, a trifle maliciously.

"I suppose she had company?" muttered Fred.

"Of course. Bob Bubbs took her home."

Hollis turned away, without a word, and went for his overcoat.

"Are you going now?" questioned Phyllis, as he again approached the door.

"Yes, I'm going," he said sourly.

"I hope you've had a pleasant time."

"Very pleasant," he bowed; but he could not disguise the sarcasm in his voice. "Good night."

Outside the door he nearly collided with Jack Cooly. The moonlight was bright, and he recognized Cooly at once.

"Wait a minute," said Hollis. "You're the Wellsburg fellow. Didn't you bring Sadie Hewett here to-night?"

"Yes," nodded Cooly.

"Are you coming back for her?"

"Sure thing."

"You're too late."

"Why?"

"She's gone. Say, old man, I may not be as slow as I look, even if they did have a lot of fun at my expense to-night. You've been given the cold shoulder, too. That lanky, Bemis, cut you out. Bemis is a farmer. What he needs is a proper trimming, and I hope you give it to him."

"Oh, I'll give it to him the first chance I get," vowed Cooly. "But what are you driving at?"

"I've got a little grudge of my own," said Fred. "Bemis and that runt, Bob Bubbs, went out together with Sadie Hewett and another girl. Of course, you know where Sadie Hewett lives. What do you say if you and I skip along that way and look after those two chaps? We might find them and warm them up a bit."

"I'm with you!" cried Cooly. "Come on!"

CHAPTER IX.

AN INTERRUPTED FIGHT.

After bidding Sadie Hewett good night at her door, Bob Bubbs waited for Bemis. In a short time Hiram came sprinting down the road, and together the two boys walked back to pass through the village on their way toward Farnham Hall.

"Great Jamaica ginger!" chuckled Bemis, "but that fat girl is funny! Bob, she's the jolliest bunch of a girl I ever struck. She just talked me to a stand-still. Can't get ahead of her any. Come to think of it, I like her a blamed sight better than any other girl I've seen to-night."

"Hiram, you're fickle!" cried Bob. "You're untrue to Phyllis."

"Oh, come off! You don't s'pose I thought Phyllis wanted me, do ye? I was jest helpin' her out. I'm not such a chump as I look. I knew she was sore on her Wellsburg feller, and so I jest done my level best to help her along."

"You're very obligin', Hi, but you certainly got Cooly down on you. He was madder than a wet hen."

"Well, you ain't got nuthin' to say. You riled Fred Hollis up till he wanted to murder you on the spot. Cooly don't belong in this town, so it ain't likely he'll trouble me. But Hollis is right in our school, and he'll lay for you, you bet your boots!"

"If he lays for me, I'll try to make it interestin' for him," said Bob. "I'm not much of a scrapper, but it will take more than Fred Hollis to frighten me."

They were passing the Methodist church in the village when two other boys suddenly sprang out of the shadows and rushed toward them.

"There they are!" cried one of the two. "I'd know that bean-pole anywhere! Bubbs is with him, and Bubbs is my meat."

"Gee whillikins!" gasped Hiram. "I guess you was right, Towser. We're in for a little rinktum right here."

Hollis and Cooly had been watching and waiting for Hiram and Bob to return, and they now planted themselves in the road, both expressing their satisfaction."

"I told you what I'd do to you, you little runt!" snarled Hollis.

"And I think I told you something was coming to you, Lengthy," observed Cooly. "I'm going to wipe up the highway with you."

"Gee whiz!" drawled Hi, who did not seem to be greatly alarmed. "You're a regular fighter, ain't ye?"

I s'pose you think you'll make yourself solid with Miss Gladleigh if you knock the starch out of me. Prob'lly you'll succeed in disgusting her so she'll throw you down for good."

"Oh, you think you can get out of it through that kind of talk!" said Cooly. "I'll take my chances with Phyllis Gladleigh after I've given you the trimming you need."

"But mebbe you won't do all the trimming that's done. I'm quite a dinged good trimmer myself. If I've got to fight with you, I'm going to fight like blazes, and you won't find me no sick kitten, neither."

"You're a big farmer! You're a hayseed!" panted Cooly. "Take off your coat!"

"Guess I don't have to. Think I can hold my own with you without taking it off."

Cooly flung his own overcoat on the snow and ripped off his undercoat. He was literally shaking with excitement.

In the meantime, Hollis pitched into Bubbs, but the little fellow dodged the first blow, ducked under Fred's arm and grappled with him. They went down together, rolling over and over on the road.

A moment later Bemis and Cooly were at it. Jack had succeeded in giving Hiram a punch in the stomach, but, to his astonishment, his feet were kicked from beneath him, and the tall boy came down upon him with all his weight.

After this the battle became savage, indeed. Several times Bob Bubbs broke away from his antagonist and tried to get up, only to be dragged down again. Once all four became mixed up so that it was difficult for them to distinguish one another. Cooly and Hollis found that the tall boy and his little companion were really plucky fighters and not at all inclined to show the white feather and cry "enough." Not only that, but Jack and Fred received fully as much punishment as their antagonists.

At a moment when the battle was raging at its fiercest a sleigh came down the street, the bells tinkling musically. There were two persons in the sleigh, and both observed the battling lads with no little astonishment. The horse was stopped, and out of the sleigh leaped a young man, who rushed forward and promptly took a hand in the conflict. Seizing two of the boys, he yanked them apart and held them until he could take a look at their faces by the moonlight.

"Hollis," he exclaimed, "I'm surprised! Bubbs, I'm astonished!"

With a snap of his right hand, he flung Hollis headlong into a snow-bank beside the road. With a snap of his left, he sent Bob Bubbs whirling into another snow-bank on the opposite side of the road.

"Perhaps that will cool you off," he muttered, as he sprang upon the other lads, who were so excited and absorbed in their struggle that they knew nothing of his appearance. Once more a boy was pitched into the snow at one side of the road, and his antagonist was flung into a drift at the opposite side.

The four boys crawled out of the snow and sat up

or rose to their hands and knees and stared at the person who had thus promptly put an end to the fight.

"Great Jamaica ginger!" grunted Bemis. "It's Mr. Merriwell!"

"Merriwell?" spluttered Hollis, spitting snow from his mouth and blowing it out of his nostrils. "He's caught us!"

"Merriwell?" murmured Bob Bubbs. "I think I'll crawl back into this drift and get out of sight!"

"Merriwell?" growled Jack Cooly. "I reckon he's really an athlete, for he handled me with one hand as if I didn't weigh more than ten pounds."

"Here, you chaps!" called Frank, motioning to them. "Get up—come here! Now I want to know what this means."

"If I must confess, I must," muttered Bubbs, as he waded out into the road. "Mr. Merriwell, I was doing my level best to put Hollis out of commission."

"If you'd let us alone about four minutes longer," said Bemis, "I'd had this Cooly feller lookin' as if a cyclone had hit him."

Neither Hollis nor Cooly said a word. In fact, Cooly was inclined to run away, but refrained from doing so because he could not immediately find his coats and his hat.

"You'll stop right where you are," said Frank grimly; "no more of this. Understand? You are not under my authority," he added, turning to Cooly, "but these other boys are. They'll explain to me to-morrow morning. Go about your business now, the whole of you. Bemis, Bubbs, and Hollis, you'll make for Farnham Hall as fast as your feet can carry you. If there's any further trouble between you to-night, I'll put you on short rations for the next week."

That was all Frank had to say just then. He retraced his steps to the sleigh and took the reins from the hands of his wife.

"What was the matter?" questioned Inza, as they drove on.

Frank laughed a bit.

"Evidently they were settling some sort of a difference," he said.

"They were fighting. You didn't scold them. You didn't reprimand them the way they deserved."

"They were in no condition to listen to a reprimand just then."

"But you've left them. They may fight again."

"Not to-night. Three of those boys know me, and they'll have no further trouble on this occasion. I should say that there has been some sort of a misunderstanding at the masquerade party. Those lads were three of my boys who received invitations to that party. They asked leave to attend, and I gave it. To-morrow morning they'll answer my questions, and I'll decide on the best course to pursue with them."

"You don't seem to be very angry because you caught them fighting in that disgraceful manner, Frank."

"Inza, I'm not so old that I've forgotten my own boyhood. I wouldn't give much for a boy who hasn't

spirit enough to fight for his rights under certain circumstances. At the same time, I discountenance fighting and brawling. If I find any boy at the school who is a natural fighter, inclined to be quarrelsome and something of a bully, I shall do my best to subdue and modify his vicious inclinations. If I find a boy who hasn't the spirit to stand up for his own rights and fight like a man when imposed on, I shall endeavor through my teachings to inculcate a little spirit into that chap. In short, I have no sympathy with a bully and scarcely more sympathy with a coward. I admire the boy who avoids trouble when he can do so without injury to his own pride, but who stands up for his rights if compelled to defend them."

"Frank," said Inza, "I believe you understand boys and boy nature better than any one else in all the world, and that's one reason why I'm confident you'll make a great success with your school."

And the next day Frank forgave Bubbs and Bemis and reprimanded Hollis, when the truth came out; which ended the trouble for the time being.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE SWIMMING TANK.

There was great excitement in the swimming tank at the gymnasium of Farnham Hall.

A game of water polo between the regular team and a scrub team was taking place.

The regular team was made up as follows:

Bubbs and Chuckleson, forwards; Brooks and Lander, backs; Bemis, half-back; Netterby, goal.

Bemis was captain of the team.

Arthur Irving was captain of the scrub.

Less than five weeks' work at Merriwell's school had brought about some remarkable developments and improvements among the swimmers. At the start big Jake Lander had seemed too lazy and too indifferent to learn to swim at all.

During the week that Merriwell's additional duties made it necessary for him to teach swimming as well as many other things, Frank had compelled Lander to spend the full period in the tank each day. Not only that, but he had aroused the sleepy chap, filled him with surprising ambition, and finally taught him to swim a little.

After that Lander became an enthusiast over swimming. No matter if he seemed half asleep on his way to the tank, the moment he plunged into the water he woke up and began to work with real enthusiasm. As a result, he won a place on the regular water-polo team which Frank had organized.

Berlin Brooks, known as "Hefty," was another slow, dull sort of fellow, but he also caught the spirit of enthusiasm and soon proved himself such a good man that he was chosen to support Lander as a back.

Tommy Chuckleson was timid. Frank banished his timidity, and Chuckleson soon grew to be a perfect water-rat.

Bubbs was a natural swimmer and very lively in the water.

Netterby was likewise a good swimmer, although not inclined to overexert himself unless compelled to do so. For this reason he was appointed to the difficult position of goal, where he could loaf a great deal, waking up only when the enemy threatened to score. In the water Bemis was not exactly a marvel, but he demonstrated the fact that he had a good head, was cool in times of excitement, and could handle the ball with a great deal of skill. Not only that, but he was the first boy to post himself thoroughly on all the rules of the game. His position as half-back was the most difficult on the team.

It must not be supposed that the entire school was satisfied over Frank's selection of players for the first team. There was more or less criticism and muttering among the boys, but Merriwell did much to silence this by plainly stating that the make-up was not final and that any outsider who demonstrated his superior ability would certainly stand a show to get onto the team.

It happened that swimming was the one sport about which Arthur Irving seemed to know considerable. As every lad at school was required to take hold of something earnestly, Irving chose swimming and made up his mind he would demonstrate to his schoolmates his superiority over Bemis or any of the regular players on the water-polo team. He made up the scrub, and day after day the two teams played in the tank. Usually they worked under the watchful eye of Thomas Farthing, the swimming instructor, but at frequent intervals Merriwell appeared and criticized, instructed, or advised them.

Frank was well pleased over the progress made by his pupils, and he told them so while encouraging and urging them on for still further improvement.

It was great sport in the tank, and it was far from uninteresting for the boys who were permitted to watch these daily contests.

On this particular day the struggle between the regulars and the scrubs was furious and exciting. During the first half each side had succeeded in making four goals. After a brief rest the players went at it again, and the scrubs awoke the enthusiasm of their admirers by securing a goal in short order.

"You've got them to-day, Irving!" shouted Fred Hollis. "You're showing them up, all right!"

"Wake up, fellers!" spluttered Bemis. "Get into this game! We're all asleep to-day! Come on now, Netterby! You might have stopped that goal!"

Farthing was acting as referee. He tossed the ball into the tank once more, and the struggle was resumed.

Bemis reached the ball and sent it flying, with a scooping stroke. The pass was a skilful one, for Bob Bubbs was able to shake off his opponent and secure the ball. Bob dribbled it a bit and then passed to Chuckleson in time to prevent a tackle. Back and forth between the two forwards of the regular team

went the ball until it was pushed over the line and Bubbs made a spurt and smashed it against the goal.

The score was tied, much to Irving's displeasure. In fact, Arthur lost his temper and gave his goal-tender a sharp call down.

Once more the players swam to their positions, and Farthing tossed the ball into the tank.

Irving made a dash for it and fancied he would secure it. Just as he reached for it, out shot one of Bemis' long arms, and again Hiram sent the ball toward the forwards.

Irving lifted himself with a powerful stroke of his arms and legs, and flung his body across Bemis, thrusting him under.

Frank Merriwell had sauntered in and was standing at the side of the tank. Instantly he spoke to Farthing, who blew a sharp blast on his whistle.

"That will be all for to-day," said Merry quietly. "I want to say a few words to you boys. We'll drop this game right here."

When they were ready to listen Frank spoke again.

"I've cautioned you more than once, boys, against losing your temper in any sort of a game. It won't do. The fellow who loses his temper hurts the chances of his own side. In water polo he's likely to make a foul, and in case he's been properly warned the other side will benefit by his foolishness to the extent of a goal. Don't get angry, boys.

"While I'm speaking of this matter I want to speak of something else that may have a bearing upon it. One great cause of nervousness and bad temper is the use of cigarettes. I have here a newspaper clipping which states that the Cigar Makers' Union, of Worcester, Mass., has voted to impose a fine of five dollars on every member of the union caught smoking a cigarette. The article continues as follows:

"This action was taken at a meeting of the union at which it was argued that cigarette smokers were sick more often than other members of the union, thus necessitating the payment of more sick benefits. A committee from the union has been investigating the subject and reported that those members who smoked cigarettes were lazy and listless and not as good workmen as those who were not slaves to the habit."

"Think it over, boys. I'm not reprimanding any one in particular, but I want to tell you that those boys who think they're fooling me by smoking cigarettes on the sly are deceiving themselves. The habit leaves its marks, not only on the fingers and faces of the smokers, but on their dispositions, their health, and their temper. Let's cut cigarettes out, boys, and become manly boys, healthy boys, real athletes.

"That's all on this point. I came in to speak of something else. At three-thirty this afternoon there will be a meeting in the main hall for the purpose of choosing a regular athletic committee for this school. The time has come when such a committee should be chosen, and it's up to you boys to select the committee. Thus far we have been working among ourselves.

Now we're going to organize various teams and meet outside teams. I have reason to believe that we can secure a water-polo game with the Wellsburg Academy team. When the athletic committee is chosen it will be authorized to negotiate with the Wellsburg Athletic Committee and to make arrangements for the game. All interested should be in the main hall at three-thirty."

Needless to say, there was a great jabbering of voices as Frank turned and left the swimming-room. At last it began to seem as if the school was entering into athletics in earnest. The boys were eager for the election of the committee.

"You got a fine call down, didn't you, Irving?" muttered Fred Hollis, as he assisted Arthur to rub down. "Merriwell fired at you, even if he didn't call any names."

"Don't I know it!" growled Irving. "I'm not a chump! This rot about cigarette smoking is sickening! He hasn't any proof that I smoke. He simply suspects it. I'll continue to smoke just the same."

"How about this athletic committee business?" questioned Fred. "I'd like to get onto that committee myself, but I want to be the chairman. If I can make it, I'll hold Bemis down, all right. He's getting altogether too forward to suit me—both he and Bob Bubbs."

"I was thinking of that," nodded Irving. "Now, I'm not popular enough to get elected to that committee—I know it. You can get onto it all right if we hustle. I'll do all I can for you, and I know some other fellows who will."

"That's the talk," said Fred. "I want to make it, Irving. If I get there, you won't suffer. There's a possibility that you'll oust Lengthy Bemis and become the real captain of the water-polo team. I'll push it through for you, if you do your best for me in this committee business, old man."

"I'm with you!" hissed Irving. "We'll get to work just as soon as we can. It seems to me that we ought to carry the day."

CHAPTER XI.

CHOOSING THE ATHLETIC COMMITTEE.

Merriwell called the meeting to order.

"It's best that you should conduct this business yourselves, boys," he said. "I believe in that. I'm here to act simply as temporary chairman. Will some one please nominate a permanent chairman?"

Instantly Arthur Irving leaped to his feet and cried: "I nominate Victor Maynard!"

"Second the nomination," came promptly from Fred Hollis.

"Maynard! Maynard! Maynard!" cried a number of the boys.

"Wa-al, by George!" drawled Jake Lander. "Them fel-lers cer-tain-ly done that sud-den. They got a-head of us oth-er fel-lers."

"But Maynard isn't chosen yet!" hissed Tommy Chuckleson. "Let's oppose it. We don't want that fellow as chairman of this meeting."

"The motion is made and seconded that Victor Maynard shall act as chairman," said Frank. "All in favor will raise their hands."

A lot of hands went up.

"I declare Maynard chosen," said Merry.

"I doubt the vote!" piped Chuckleson. "Give us the test, Mr. Merriwell."

Frank smiled.

"Very well," he said. "All in favor of Maynard as chairman of this meeting will please hold up their hands."

Again the hands went up.

"Hands down," directed Merry. "Now those against him will make a show of hands."

It was evident at a glance that the majority of the boys had voted for Maynard, and Merry promptly invited him to take the chair.

With a queer smile of satisfaction on his face, Victor Maynard walked to the platform and took his position beside the desk, on which he rapped for order.

"Schoolmates," he said, his eyes flickering unsteadily and looking no one straight in the face, "I thank you for the honor. I'll try to do my best as chairman."

"That's our first victory, Hollis," whispered Irving. "Now we ought to carry things our own way."

"How shall the committee be elected?" asked Maynard. "Shall we vote for each member with slips or by a show of hands?"

Irving sprang up to propose that the vote be taken by a display of hands, thinking Maynard would favor Hollis in such a case. This time, however, Arthur was a trifle slow, for Bob Bubbs caught the chairman's eye and was recognized by Maynard.

"I propose," said Bubbs, "that we vote by slips. Let each man write the name of his candidate on a slip of paper and deposit it in a hat on the platform. Then there can be no question concerning the fairness of the vote."

"That's right! that's right!" cried a number of voices.

"Evidently it is the desire of this meeting that the voting should be done in the manner just proposed," said Maynard. "Therefore we shall vote by slips. I appoint Walter Shackleton and Simeon Scrogg to assist me in counting the votes. Come up here, Shackleton and Scrogg. One of you bring a hat."

The two boys named ascended the platform, and a hat was placed where the lads could file past and drop their votes into it.

And now of a sudden there was a great hubbub and babel of voices.

Maynard rapped for order.

"Schoolmates," he said, "it seems to me a good plan to elect the chairman of the athletic committee first. In this manner the entire school will have the privilege of voting for the chairman, whereas they would not have

that privilege if the committee should be chosen first with the liberty of appointing its own chairman. Therefore, you will understand that the first member elected to this committee will act as the chairman of the committee."

"Oh, we've got 'em!" chuckled Irving. "Maynard is carrying the thing through just as we want him to."

Then he sprang to his feet, crying loudly:

"Hollis! Hollis for chairman! Vote for Fred Hollis!"

"Hollis! Hollis!" shouted several other voices.

Then another name was heard.

To the universal amazement of the boys, Jake Lander once more woke up.

"What's the matter with Hiram Bemis?" he belied.

Instantly a chorus answered:

"He's all right!"

"Hollis! Hollis!" shouted Fred's supporters.

"Bemis! Bemis!" cried those in favor of the tall boy.

Again Maynard thumped the desk.

"Bring in your votes, schoolmates," he directed. "The polls are open."

There was a rush toward the platform.

"Watch close, boys," said Maynard. "Don't let any of these fellers get in more than one vote."

The voting was over in a few minutes, and the boys retired to their seats to await the announcement of the result.

Maynard poured the votes from the hat onto the desk, and, with his assistants, began to assort them.

"What do you think, Irving?" asked Fred Hollis anxiously. "Do you believe we've won out? Do you believe I've been elected?"

"I think there's no question about it," answered Irving. "It may be pretty close, but I know you have the most votes."

"If I can get ahead of Bemis, it'll delight me," muttered Fred.

After a few moments the chairman rapped for order.

"You will listen to the standing of the vote," he said. "Whole number of votes cast, forty-eight. Necessary for choice, twenty-five. Fred Hollis has twenty-one, Hiram Bemis has sixteen, Victor Maynard has five, Berlin Brooks has four, and Arthur Irving has two. We'll have to call another vote, as there is no choice."

"I told you you had the most votes," said Irving.

"But I didn't have enough to get elected," muttered Hollis disappointedly.

"Never mind, we'll fix that now. I'm going to throw my two votes for you if I can, and I think Maynard will do the same. That will give you seven more, which will be enough."

Having made this statement, Irving rose and cried in a loud voice:

"If the two friends who voted for me wish to do me a particular favor, they will now cast their votes for Fred Hollis."

"Hollis! Hollis! Hollis!" shouted many voices. Up rose Berlin Brooks.

"Look here, fellows," he called, in his heavy voice, "I'm no fit chap to be chairman of that committee, and it's evident from the size of my vote that I couldn't be if I wanted to. Four fellows voted for me. If they want to stand by me, they'll throw their votes for Hiram Bemis."

"Bemis! Bemis! Bemis!"

"One moment," said the chairman, lifting his voice for silence.

"Now it's coming, Hollis!" said Irving. "Maynard will swing his five votes over to you."

There was a hush as they waited to hear what the chairman had to say.

"Like Brooks," said Victor, "it is evident that I can't be chosen as chairman of the committee if I wanted to. Five fellows voted for me. I thank them. I will thank them still more if, on the next vote, they will cast their ballots for Hiram Bemis."

"Bemis! Bemis! Bemis!" thundered Hiram's delighted backers.

Fred Hollis seized Arthur Irving by the collar, his face suddenly grown white.

"What the devil does that mean?" he hissed. "Is Maynard daffy? He's gone back on me!"

"That's right!" admitted Irving, in astonishment. "He's given us the double cross, but let's not give up. Perhaps all those fellows won't vote the way they've been directed. Let's wait for the result."

Once more the boys marched up and deposited their slips in the hat. When all had voted, the contents of the hat was turned out upon the desk, and the slips were sorted.

The task seemed an easy one, for the committee quickly divided the votes into two piles. While Hollis was endeavoring to suppress his emotions of anger and disappointment, Maynard called for silence and again announced the vote.

"Once more forty-eight votes have been thrown," he said. "Only two names appear. Fred Hollis has twenty-three, while Hiram Bemis has twenty-five, and I declare Bemis elected chairman of the athletic committee."

The remaining four members of the committee were swiftly chosen, after which there was some general discussion over the policy of the school in the matter of athletics. As chairman of the committee, Hiram Bemis pledged himself to work constantly for the welfare of the whole school. His speech was awkward enough, but there was a ring of sincerity in it, and he was given a hearty round of applause at the finish.

As Victor Maynard was leaving the room Fred Hollis pounced upon him in the hallway.

"You sneak!" hissed Hollis. "What do you mean by going back on me that way?"

"Don't put your hands on me, Hollis!" said Vic. "You remember what happened over at The Elms not so long ago. You left me to watch Charles Courtney,

and Courtney escaped. When you were questioned about it by Merriwell, instead of fibbing a little, you owned up that I sent you for cigarettes. Not only that, but I've heard that you've hinted more than once about something crooked in the way Courtney escaped. You have given lots of fellows the impression that I stood in with him and that I lied in saying there was a man in the closet who helped him get away. I've been waiting for a chance to get back at you, and I found my opportunity to-day. Now don't bother me. Take your hands off me, and keep away from me in the future!"

Brushing Fred's hand aside, Victor passed on.

CHAPTER XII.

DEACON HEWETT'S THREAT.

The new athletic committee had no trouble whatever in making arrangements for a water-polo game with the "Sprites" of Wellsburg Academy. Jack Cooly was captain of the Sprites, and he felt that this would be a good opportunity for him to show up Merriwell's boys and settle the point as to whether the latter were in the same class as Wellsburg. Further than that, Jack had learned that Hiram Bemis was captain of the Bloomfield team, and he longed to have a reckoning with Hiram.

It was not long before the people of Bloomfield learned that such a game was to take place in the gymnasium at Farnham Hall on a certain date. There was more or less interest over it and considerable talk, the most of which seemed to be made by Deacon Hewett.

"Near as I ken find out," declared the deacon, "this here water-polo game is brutal and dangerous. It ain't fit for boys to take part in. Mebbe somebody will be drowned. The authorities of this town hadn't ought to permit such things. If they do their duty, they'll jest go down there and stop it."

After all this talk he finally decided that no one in the village besides himself was inclined to interfere with the game. At last he held a consultation with Lawyer Dobbs, after which he publicly announced that it was his intention to stop the game with the aid of the law.

Of course, Frank heard of this threat, and he laughed heartily over it.

"I wonder what point of law the deacon is going to bring to bear on us," he said. "How does he propose to stop it? It'll interest me to learn how he's going about it."

On the day of the game a large number of boys came over from Wellsburg with the Sprites.

Prominent people of Bloomfield and others who were not so prominent, but who, according to Merriwell's fancy, might be interested in the game, were invited to attend.

The attendance was even larger than Frank had anticipated. He was pleased to observe that a fair percentage of the Bloomfield people invited had accepted the invitation.

Deacon Hewett did not put in an appearance until after the two teams had entered the tank and the game was about to begin. When the deacon did appear he was accompanied by Hobson Dobbs, the lawyer, and by a raw-boned, red-whiskered man, who was chewing tobacco and wore in plain view on his coat a badge, on which was stamped the word "Constable."

"Howdy do, deacon," said Frank Merriwell, instantly observing his crabbed enemy and hastening to meet him. "I'm glad you've come. I hope you'll enjoy the game."

"Glad I've come, be ye?" snapped Hewett. "Well, by jux! mebbe you won't be so glad arter awhile. Yes, I've come, and I've brought a representative of the law with me—two representatives of the law. I've got Squire Dobbs right here, and I've also brought the constable. We're goin' to stop this business—we're goin' to nip it right in the bud, sir! Yes, siere! You'll find out what we're here for."

"How can you stop it in a legal manner, deacon?" inquired Merry. "I'm not entirely ignorant of the law, and I fail to recollect anything in the statutes that will give you authority to interfere with a game of this sort."

"You're mighty knowin', you be!" sneered the deacon; "but I kinder guess, by jing! that there's a few things you don't know! Any citizen ken make complaint and bring about legal interference with a brutal exhibition. They stop prize-fights, and they ain't no wuss than this business. If prize-fighting is brutal and dangerous, why ain't a game like this, where somebody is liable to be drowned? Oh, I guess we know what we're talking about! Eh, constable?"

"You bet we do!" said the red-whiskered officer, rolling his quid of tobacco over his tongue.

"The deacon is quite right, Merriwell," declared Dobbs. "We've come to watch this game. If, in our judgment, it is brutal and dangerous, the constable has authority to stop it."

"If Deacon Hewett interferes to-day, I shall promptly bring suit against him and push it as far as possible. The business of this school is athletics. An interference now will damage me, but I think Elnathan Hewett will pay the damage."

Saying this, Frank turned away and gave them no further attention for the time being.

All arrangements had been made for the game to begin. The referee and umpires had been chosen, and the players swam to their positions at a blast of the whistle.

Below are given the positions of both teams:

WIZARDS.	POSITIONS.	SPRITES.
Bubs.....	First forward	Perkins
Chuckleson.....	Second forward	Flick
Bemis.....	Half-back	Cooly
Lander.....	First back	Tindall
Brooks.....	Second back	Boyd
Netterby.....	Goal	Soul

The referee tossed the ball into the tank, and the two half-backs dashed for it.

At the outset Cooly was a bit quicker and cleverer, with the result that he scooped the ball and passed it to one of his forwards.

For a few moments there was a great deal of swift work in the water, as Perkins and Flick tried to carry the ball over the Wizards' line and attack the goal.

Finally Brooks bobbed up and snapped the ball away from Flick, casting it backward over his head toward Bemis, who secured it and passed it on to Chuckleson.

In this manner the Sprites were temporarily checked, but the setback proved no more than temporary, for Tindall made a clever tackle and Boyd recovered the sphere.

Boyd passed to Cooly, and out shot one of Bemis' long arms and scooped the ball from Jack's clutches.

Cooly was astounded and angered. In his anger he forgot himself and struck Hiram an open-hand blow on the jaw.

For a moment Bemis sank from view, but he came up promptly and seemed not a whit damaged.

It happened that the referee had not seen the foul. Therefore, Cooly escaped reprimand, and his side was not in danger of punishment should the action be repeated.

On the edge of the tank stood Deacon Hewett, with Dobbs at his right and the constable at his left.

The constable pulled the deacon's sleeve as he exclaimed:

"There it is! There you have it, deacon! Now's our chance to stop the game right snap short!"

"That's right," agreed Dobbs, "we can stop it now. Hadn't we better do so, Mr. Hewett?"

"Hold on! hold on!" remonstrated Elnathan, whose eyes were beginning to gleam and who seemed strangely absorbed. "Let's not be in such a tarnation hurry! There's plenty of time. They'll do something wuss than that bimeby. We'll have chances enough to interfere."

Therefore the game went on. In a few moments the Sprites were successful in carrying the ball over the Wizards' line. Netterby was outwitted, and a goal was secured.

"Drat it! drat it!" muttered Deacon Hewett. "I don't like that! Them Wellsburg chaps ain't got no business to come here and beat fellers belongin' in our town!"

"They don't belong here," reminded Dobbs.

"Well, they do jest now. Why don't they wake up?"

Then the deacon lifted his voice and cried:

"Hi! hi! there, you fellows. What's the matter with ye? Be ye goin' to let Wellsburg do you up?"

"Shut up!" rasped Hobson Dobbs, shaking Elnathan's sleeve. "Are you losing your head?"

"By thutter!" muttered the deacon. "I did kinder forgit myself."

But the ball had been given to the referee, and the players were again in their places. Once more the sphere was tossed into the tank, and this time Bemis secured it."

"It's purty rough, it's purty brutal, deacon," said the constable. "I tell ye it's something that hadn't oughter be 'lowed."

"S'pose that's right," agreed Hewett; "but this is the fust time I ever see a game like this. Fact is, I ain't never seen much of any of these here games they play so much. Never did take no interest in 'em. Allus reckoned 'em foolish and sinful and kept away from 'em. Oh, great jing! looker that! looker that! Them Wellsburg fellers has the ball ag'in. I'm 'fraid they're goin' to make another score."

The deacon was justified in his apprehension, for the Wellsburg forwards deftly worked the ball over the line and again deceived Netterby, securing a goal.

Hewett looked very dejected and downcast.

"It's a tarnal shame!" he muttered. "Arter all the talk this Merriwell has made about athletics, he's goin' to let them Wellsburg chaps come here and beat his team."

The playing was quickly resumed, and within a short time it became fast and furious. Bemis urged his players on, encouraging and instructing them at the same time. During a savage scrimmage, in which the water flew and many of the spectators were bespattered, Elnathan Hewett nearly lost his balance and fell into the tank. He was saved by Dobbs and the constable, who grasped him.

"Land of Goshen!" gasped Hewett. "Ain't they stirrin' her up some now! Never see no such business as that in the water! Never s'posed boys could swim and hyper round in the water like that!"

Out from the midst of the scrimmage shot the ball, punted by one of the players. Bubbs secured it, and dribbled toward the Sprites' goal.

Soul was waiting on defense.

Suddenly Bemis rose to the surface in a position to help Bubbs. Bob passed the ball to Hiram.

Soul turned toward the captain of the Wizards.

Hiram shot the ball back to Bubbs, and a moment later Bubbs smashed it against the goal.

Once more Deacon Hewett came near falling into the tank. He uttered a yell that was heard above the cheer which burst from the admirers of the home team. For a few moments he acted like a crazy man.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEACON IS CONVERTED—AND BAPTIZED.

The first half ended with the Sprites one goal in the lead. The Wizards had made three and the Sprites four.

During the intermission Dobbs again urged the deacon to take the action he had threatened, but Hewett declared the time was not opportune.

"We'll let them git at it ag'in," he said. "Then I'll give ye the signal, and you ken put a stop to it."

The opening of the second half was even more exciting, if possible, than any previous stage of the game. There were several sharp scrimmages, in which neither team seemed to obtain an advantage.

Finally the ball was flung out from the midst of the splashing players and Cooley went for it.

Bemis did the same, and it was he who secured the ball, giving it a snap toward the Sprites' goal.

Again the baffled captain of the Wellsburg team lost his head. Seizing Bemis about the neck, Cooley struck him in the face with his fist.

"Now's our chance, deacon!" cried Dobbs. "We'll never have a better one! The time has come to stop it!"

"Hold on, squire—hold on!" rasped Elnathan, his hand falling on the lawyer's shoulder. "Don't you interfere with this game on peril of your life! I'll bet fifty cents that our boys win—yes, squire, I'll bet a whole dollar!"

The referee had blown his whistle, and he was warning Cooley against repeating the foul.

Hiram Bemis had not lost his temper. Far from it, he was grinning good-naturedly.

Somehow the behavior of Cooley seemed to rattle his players for the time being.

Nevertheless, the clever work of Soul in defending the Wellsburg goal prevented the Wizards from securing an advantage at that point in the struggle.

A few moments later the Sprites made another goal through a fluke.

Elnathan Hewett groaned dimly.

"I'm 'fraid our boys is beat!" he muttered. "It's a shame! It's too bad!"

It was not long, however, before he woke up again. The visitors' goal was threatened, and, through a clever bit of deception, Bubbs led Soul to leave his position. Then the ball was snapped to Chuckleson, who scored.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Hiram Bemis. "Who was defending that goal just then? Not a Soul!"

"Yee! yow-wow! yoop!" cried the deacon. "That's the stuff, boys! Git one more, and you'll tie 'em! You can do it!"

Hobson Dobbs gave the excited man a jab in the ribs.

"Deacon Hewett," he said, "you make me sick! I'm going! I came here to attend to business, and you've gone foolish! Good day!"

"Good day," said the deacon. "Don't wait on my 'count. Hurry right off and 'tend to all the business you want to."

The second half was drawing toward its close when the Wizards proved their skill by once more rushing Soul and obtaining the goal that tied the score.

Deacon Hewett did a war-dance on the edge of the tank.

"How do you Wellsburg fellers like that?" he howled. "You can't come down here and beat us! We're good for ye! We ken do ye up!"

"Push it, boys—push it!" urged Bemis, as the players resumed their positions and the referee again stood ready to toss the ball into the tank.

The visitors seemed demoralized by the success of the home team. In advance they had believed it would be the easiest thing imaginable to defeat the Wizards. Now, however, they realized their mistake, and it made them anxious and nervous.

On the other hand, the Wizards had grown confident and determined to win out, if such a thing was possible.

Among all the rooters for the home team there was none more earnest than Deacon Hewett, who seemed to have entirely forgotten himself and his prejudices.

The final scrimmage was brief and exciting. Lack

of confidence on the part of the Sprites proved their undoing at the finish. The determined enemy outwitted them and again pushed the ball over the line and secured a goal. Just as Bubbs smashed the ball against the goal the referee blew a double blast on his whistle, announcing the finish of the half and the end of the game.

Then Frank Merriwell's pupils went wild with triumphant delight.

There was another person who likewise went wild. Once more Deacon Hewett did a wild war-dance, yelling at the top of his voice. In the midst of it his feet flew from beneath him, and into the tank he plunged.

It happened that Frank Merriwell was standing near the deacon when this accident occurred. Instantly Merry made a dive into the water, and when he came up he had the deacon.

Both were pulled out in short order.

The deacon sat on the edge of the tank, with his feet in the water, gasping and strangling in an endeavor to articulate.

Merry bent over him and asked:

"Are you all right, Deacon Hewett? I hope you're not hurt. How do you feel?"

"How do I feel? Tickled to death, by jing! We done 'em up! Yoop! yow-yow! 'Ray! 'ray! for the Wizards!"

THE END.

The Next Number (515) Will Contain

DICK MERRIWELL'S SATISFACTION

OR,

Hot Work at Indoor Baseball.

The Morning After—The Penalty—Still Scheming—Outlining the Snare—Chet Succeeds—A Distinguished Guest—The Great Musician Plays—Chet Makes a Mess of It—By Unseen Hands—The Mystery Explained—After the Party—Ring Owns Up—Arlington's Three Bagger—Fairport's Fine Start—The Fatal Magnet in the Dressing Room—The Little Demon Does His Work.

Beware of cheap imitations of the Tip Top Weekly. Frank and Dick Merriwell and their friends appear only in the pages of Tip Top. BURT L. STANDISH writes exclusively for Tip Top and has been the author of the ONLY and ORIGINAL Merriwell stories for over nine years.

About the Early Numbers of Tip Top Weekly

We receive hundreds of letters every week from readers asking if we can supply the early numbers of Tip Top containing Frank's adventures. In every case we are obliged to reply that numbers 1 to 300 are entirely out of print.

We would like to call the attention of our readers to the fact that the Frank Merriwell Stories now being published in book form in the Medal Library are inclusive of these early numbers. The first book to appear was No. 150 entitled "Frank Merriwell's Schooldays."

We give herewith a complete list of all the stories that have been published in book form up to the time of writing. We will be glad to send a fine colored cover catalogue of the Medal Library which is just filled with good things for boys, upon receipt of a one-cent stamp to cover postage.

The Price of The Merriwell Books is Ten Cents per Copy. At all Newsdealers

Frank Merriwell at Yale.	Medal No. 205.	10c.
Frank Merriwell Down South.	Medal No. 189.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Camp.	Medal No. 258.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in England.	Medal No. 340.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Europe.	Medal No. 201.	10c.
Frank Merriwell in Maine.	Medal No. 276.	10c.
Frank Merriwell on the Road.	Medal No. 300.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Athletes.	Medal No. 233.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Bicycle Tour.	Medal No. 217.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Book of Physical Development.	Diamond Hand-Book No. 6.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Bravery.	Medal No. 193.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Champions.	Medal No. 240.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Chase.	Medal No. 271.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Chums.	Medal No. 167.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's College Chums.	Medal No. 312.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Courage.	Medal No. 225.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Cruise.	Medal No. 267.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Danger.	Medal No. 251.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Daring.	Medal No. 229.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Fame.	Medal No. 308.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's First Job.	Medal No. 284.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Foes.	Medal No. 178.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Fortune.	Medal No. 320.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Great Scheme.	Medal No. 336.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Hard Luck.	Medal No. 292.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Hunting Tour.	Medal No. 197.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Loyalty.	Medal No. 254.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's New Comedian.	Medal No. 324.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Opportunity.	Medal No. 288.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Own Company.	Medal No. 304.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Problem.	Medal No. 316.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Prosperity.	Medal No. 328.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Protege.	Medal No. 296.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Races.	Medal No. 213.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Return to Yale.	Medal No. 244.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's School-Days.	Medal No. 150.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Secret.	Medal No. 247.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Skill.	Medal No. 237.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Sports Afield.	Medal No. 208.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Stage Hit.	Medal No. 332.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Struggle.	Medal No. 280.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Trip West.	Medal No. 184.	10c.
Frank Merriwell's Vacation.	Medal No. 262.	10c.

BOYS!

BOYS!

BOYS!

TIP TOP FREE POST CARDS!

AT the present time over one hundred thousand copies of "TIP TOP" are sold throughout the United States every week! There are many good reasons why boys like "TIP TOP" better than any other five cent weekly publication. Why do **YOU** like it?

We have prepared a set of six handsome post cards, which we will send to every boy who will write and give us his opinion of "TIP TOP."

These cards are illustrations of Frank Merriwell, Brad Buckhart, Obediah Tubbs, Joe Crowfoot, Dick Merriwell, and Cap'n Wiley.

They are printed in many colors and will be a fine addition to any boy's collection of post cards. Write now. They are free.



STREET & SMITH

PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK



NEW YORK, February 17, 1906.

TERMS TO TIP TOP WEEKLY MAIL SUBSCRIBERS.

(Postage Free.)

Single Copies or Back Numbers, 5c. Each.

3 months.....	65c.	One year.....	\$2.50
4 months.....	85c.	2 copies one year.....	4.00
6 months.....	\$1.25	1 copy two years.....	4.00

How to Send Money—By post-office or express money order, registered letter, bank check or draft, at our risk. At your own risk if sent by currency, coin, or postage stamps in ordinary letter.

Receipts—Receipt of your remittance is acknowledged by proper change of number on your label. If not correct you have not been properly credited, and should let us know at once.

STREET & SMITH'S TIP TOP WEEKLY,
79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

TIP TOP ROLL OF HONOR.

Following the suggestion of Mr. Burt L. Standish, that appeared in his letter to Tip Top readers in No. 480, the following loyal Tip Toppers have won for themselves a place on our Honor Roll for their efforts to increase the circulation of the King of Weeklies. Get in line boys and girls and strive to have your name at the head of the list.

Thomas Schounour, Womesdorff, Pa.

C. E. Coberly, Holden, W. Va.

Geo. B. Welsh, 948 North Ave., Allegheny, Pa.

C. F. S., Mexia, Texas.

W. E. H., Worcester, Mass.

Emile Olsen, 2419 Dodge St., Omaha, Neb.

Alfred S. Bryan, Warrensburg, Mo.

W. H. Alkire, 295 Lamal St., Bridgeton, N. J.

Loyal Canadian Tip Topper, Renfrew, Ont.

Eugene St. Laurent, Saginaw, Mich.

The names of other enthusiastic Tip Toppers will be added from time to time. Send in the result of your efforts to push the circulation of your favorite weekly and win a place on the Roll of Honor.

APPLAUSE.

Owing to the number of letters received, the editors of Tip Top cannot undertake to secure their publication under six weeks. Those who contribute to this department must not expect to see them before that time.

As it has been some time since I have written a letter of Applause, and as I have just finished reading TIP TOP No. 497, I can't resist the temptation to write you a few lines.

It is needless to say what I think of your "ideal publication," as you certainly understand what every true Tip Topper thinks of it. It keeps getting better and better every week, and I have been reading it from No. 1 to the present.

I note that many of the readers state their likes and dislikes. If the readers would only stop and think for a moment they would not say so much about their dislikes. Don't you know, dear reader, when you go to the theater there has to be a villain, the same as in TIP TOP?

I note in the Applause column several readers wish to exchange souvenir postals. I am willing to exchange with any one; would also like to correspond with "A Kansas Lassie"

who, in 497, said she would like to correspond with some of the readers.

Would like to exchange cards with J. R. Pedigo; will send card for card. I also have a number of old TIP TOPS, and any of the readers are welcome to them if they will pay postage for the same.

With best regards to Street & Smith and Burt L. Standish, I must close, remaining a true Tip Topper,
Lock Box 1235, Pittsburg, Pa. FRANK J. WALLACE, JR.

"Kansas Lassie" seems to be very popular with our readers. She will probably receive quite a number of letters from all over the country.

As I have been reading TIP TOP for over a year, and have never written a letter to the Applause column, I thought it was time to write. Of Frank's flock, I like Diamond, Hodge, Ready, Browning, Mulloy, Gallup best. Of Dick's, I like Brad, Earl, Ted, Bob, Obediah, and Chip. Of course I like Frank and Dick best. I wish Dick had a friend from Virginia. I would like to hear from some TIP TOP readers. I will also exchange post-cards with any of the readers who wish to. With best wishes to Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith I will close. With best wishes to TIP TOP, I remain,

SAM BERRY.

735 College Street, Bedford City, Va.

Here is another admirer of TIP TOP who lives in Bedford City, Va. There are a great many readers there, and they are beginning to make themselves known.

I have for some time been a constant reader of TIP TOP, and think it an ideal publication for the young people to read. It does more to uplift their thoughts than any other book. As for the Elsie-Inza question, I think her to be the girl for Frank. She is more loving and kind than Inza.

I have long desired a league badge, and enclosed will be found two coupons and ten cents. I'll now ring off, with best wishes to Merry and his flock, Burt L. Standish, and Street & Smith,

WILBERT HAHEN.

Benezette, Pa.

What you say about the influence of the TIP TOP WEEKLY on its readers expresses the opinion of thousands who have been benefited by reading of Frank and Dick's numerous exploits.

Not seeing any letter in your Applause from this town, I take the liberty to join in the praise of the TIP TOP, which, to my notion, is the best weekly of its kind published, because the characters are so lifelike. Having chosen the stage as my profession, I have a fine chance to study the characters of so many different people. I think Zona is more like the American girl of to-day, as she is always changing her mind. Wishing success to Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith, I will close. I would like to hear from the young lady who signs A Kansas Lassie, and others who care to write,

L. F.

58 Elm Street, Kokomo, Ind.

The reason why you admire the characters of TIP TOP is that they are drawn from life and have all the traits of living, breathing people. It is the human interest to be found in the stories that make them so popular with all readers, young and old, girls and boys, men and women.

Being an old "vet," I hope you will not consider this, my second letter to the Applause column, an imposition; but I've just got to write and let off some of this superfluous steam which has been accumulating since my last letter, a year and a half ago.

My, but aren't the latest TIP TOPS "birds." Well, I guess yes. Dick back at Fardale! Wow! look out for the doings now. Well, here's success to him and his "crowd," and may their shadows never grow less. Drink her down, all loyal Tip Toppers! Was glad to see Chet get his walking-papers. He was an "onery cur," and should have gotten them long ago; but still there is one quality in him which won my admiration, and that was his "grit." I see in a late number where some one claims that Dick was foolish to listen to June and give Chet another chance. Well, I don't know what he would have done, but I feel pretty sure that the average American boy would have done as Dick did; anyhow, I'm sure this end of the pen would

have. The critic must live where June Arlontons and her equivalents, the American girl, do not blossom, or I don't quite think he would have spoken the way he did. Well, well, what's the matter with the Juneites? Wake up! Wake up! You all don't seem to realize that the Dorisites are giving us too close a race to be comfortable. Are we going to stand by idle and let June—our June—go undefended? This will never do. Wake up! Flood Applause with your letters. Come now, show your colors! Well, readers, I am quite sure you have grown tired reading this "bosh," so will bid you *au revoir*. But a few words more to the correspondents. Here's a Southern "kid" soliciting correspondence. Write to me, "all" of you, the girls included, and I'll insure you all a square deal, i. e., a prompt answer. Juneites, let me hear from you, also Dorisites, and let me see if I cannot convince you of your error and bring a new recruit to June's standard. Remember, the "invite" is open to all, the fair sex especially. Wish some officer of International Correspondence Club would write to me, if said club still exists. Well, with three cheers for "Old Reliable," Burt L. Standish, Street & Smith, and last, but not least, the "flock," I remain,

Dixon Academy, Covington, La.
RENE P. BERNARD.

A very enthusiastic reader whose words show that he is sincere in what he says about the famous TIP TOP. Our Southern friends have been very loyal to the weekly, and this writer from Covington, La., is no exception.

I am going to take the pleasure of writing a few words of praise in honor of that grand book, namely, TIP TOP WEEKLY. I have written to the TIP TOP Applause column before, but it was never published. I have had the pleasure of reading the TIP TOP since it has been published, and I will say it seems to be getting better with every number. All my boy and girl friends read the TIP TOP, and I assure you that we can hardly wait till the next number is issued. Mr. Standish will never have any more sincere admirers than we are. I have just had two dozen pictures taken of myself. If any of the young lady readers care to exchange photos, why, the pleasure would be all mine. I think it would be a good idea for the readers to get acquainted with each other. I also have a large amount of back numbers, and if any of the readers care to write to me, maybe I will have the numbers they require. I would very much like to correspond with Miss Pearl Kean. Sincerely yours,

523 Garfield Boulevard, Chicago, Ill.
HARRY HAYES.

Thank you for your praise, Harry. TIP TOP is, as you say, getting better with every number.

Having read TIP TOP for a long time, and having never written to the Applause, I thought I would let the readers know that there was a reader of the king of weeklies in old Bedford. I have done all I could to increase the circulation of TIP TOP. I have succeeded in getting several readers in this town. I would like to see Brad knock some of that swelling out of Chet's head. I think Frank and Dick are fine. I would like to exchange souvenir post-cards with all of the TIP TOP readers. Well, I will close, wishing success to Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith,

Bedford City, Va.
CLAUDE E. MARTIN.

We are glad to hear from you, and thank you for your appreciative little note.

I have been reading TIP TOP nearly four years, and will continue to read it as long as it is published. Of the characters, I of course like Dick best, as I am not very well acquainted with Frank and his chums. I think all the characters are necessary. I am in favor of a correspondence club, and would like especially to correspond with any one having the first three hundred numbers that they would sell or exchange. With regards and best wishes to Mr. Burt L. Standish and Messrs. Street & Smith, sincerely yours,

J. O. BLACKMON.
West Point, Ga.

The early stories of TIP TOP, which portray the life of Frank Merriwell, can be obtained in the Medal Library. We suggest this so that in case you cannot effect an exchange with other readers you will know how the stories can be obtained in a neat, compact form at a moderate price.

I have just finished reading TIP TOP No. 497, and, in my opinion, it is the best you have published for a long time. Talk

about being delighted. I will bet that I was the happiest boy in Oysterville when I read about Rob Riorden getting his knocks from our old friend, Dick Merriwell. I have been reading TIP TOP for two years, but I have missed a lot of numbers in that time; but I now mean to start and keep them up. I agree with Mr. Ralph Martin Tripcony that it would be a good idea to reprint TIP TOP back to 265. I think Chet Arlington has about reached his limit, and he should be tarred and feathered and ridden out of Fardale on a rail the next time he puts in an appearance there. All of the characters suit me except Arlington and Riorden. I am collecting souvenir postal cards, and some of the readers will hear from me shortly. As this letter is getting very long, I will close, with good wishes to Burt L. Standish, Street & Smith, and Dick and his friends.

Baltimore, Md.

A LAD FROM OYSTERVILLE.

The Medal Library, which sells for ten cents a copy, contains the stories which appeared in the TIP TOP WEEKLY previous to No. 265. This is the only form in which they are issued.

Having been a reader of your famous and widely known publication from No. 1 till date, I take the liberty to express my opinion. I have read fiction by almost every author in English type, and can truly say that I like TIP TOP the best.

One of my friends, who is a critic, had a heated argument with me, calling me a fool for reading such trash. I told him all the good TIP TOP has done for thousands of youths in your lectures on smoking, drinking, gambling, etc. I could not convince him of his wrong ideas. We parted in anger, but two months later he came to me and apologized. Now he is reading TIP TOP, and says that every number is worth one dollar. I have never found fault with any number.

When Dick enters college I hope he will have just as good a flock as Frank had. Every character of TIP TOP is portrayed O. K.

Wishing success to Mr. Standish and Street & Smith, I remain, a loyal Tip Topper,
New York City.

HARRY EPHRAIM.

The influence that the TIP TOP WEEKLY has exerted over the lives of thousands of young men is marvelous. The exemplary lives of our heroes, Frank Merriwell and his brother Dick, have helped to mold the character of the young men of America.

As I am a constant reader of TIP TOP, I thought I would write and tell you what I think of it. I can't express words enough to really let everybody know what the boys around here think, but we can say this, that TIP TOP, Burt L. Standish, and Street & Smith are the ones that "can't be beat."

I will be very glad to have Brooklyn members of the C. M. A. write to me. The C. M. A. is the largest, strongest secret society for boys in the world, and has eighty thousand members and three thousand lodges in Africa, England, Scotland, and all over the world.

I have sent postal cards to certain boys who have said they would be glad to exchange, but have not received any in exchange.

Dick is O. K., but I like Frank best. Elsie always was my favorite and I was sorry that Frank did not marry her.

Wishing three cheers, good health, and good luck to all, I am, Bath Beach, N. Y.

ARNOLD A. MOWBRAY.

Your society is very secret, for no one seems to know anything about it. What do those mysterious letters, "C. M. A.," stand for? We hope that it has nothing to do with the "black hand." If the three thousand lodges ever broke loose, what would we all do? We ask you to use your influence and keep them chained up.

I have been a reader of the TIP TOP two or three years, and like it best of all papers. Frank, Dick, and Brad I like best. I hope Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith a long life, and wish they will keep the TIP TOP in print the rest of their lives. Hoping to see this in print, yours truly,

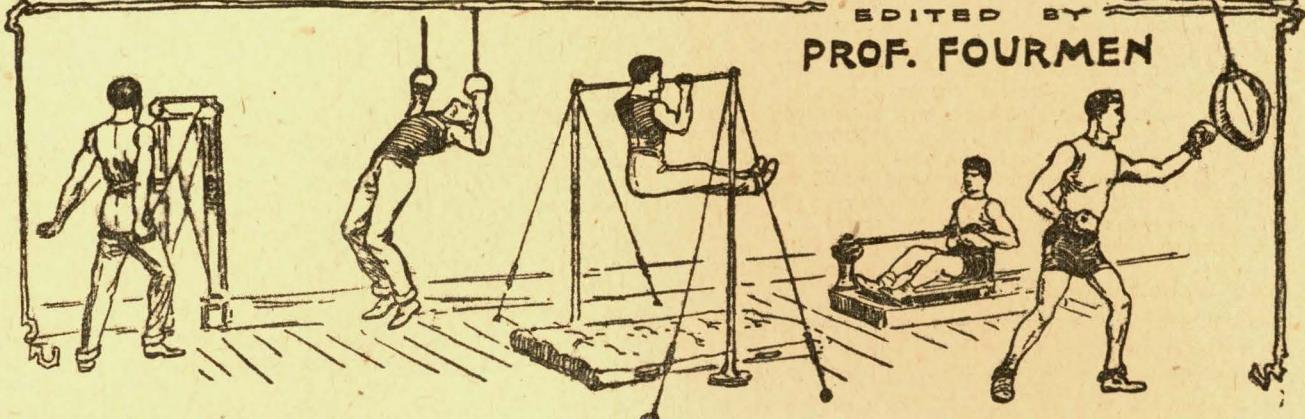
I. A. N.

Lake Mills, Ia.

We thank you for your good wishes, and hope that you will remain a TIP TOP reader to the end of your days.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

EDITED BY
PROF. FOURMEN



PROF. FOURMEN: Being a reader of the TIP TOP WEEKLY for over four years, I take the liberty of asking you a few questions. My age is 15 years; height, 5 feet 2 inches; wrist, 6½ inches; neck, 14 inches; shoulder to shoulder, 18 inches; biceps, normal, 9½ inches; flexed, 10½ inches; forearm, 9½ inches; waist, 29 inches; calf, 13 inches; ankle, 9½ inches; thigh, 19 inches; weight, 109 pounds; chest, normal, 29 inches; expanded, 33 inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. What are my weak points? 3. How should I strengthen my weak points?

Steubenville, Ohio.

A TIP TOP READER.

Your measurements are very good. Take a general course in a gymnasium to keep yourself from growing "stale."

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a reader of TIP TOP for some months, I would like to ask a few questions concerning physical development. I am 12 years 11 months old; weigh about 84 pounds; height, 4 feet 11 inches; chest, 29½ inches; expanded, 31 inches; forearm, 9¾ inches; calf, 11¾ inches. I can hold out sixteen and one-half pounds with right arm, can lift one hundred and thirty-five pounds with back, and throw a seven-and-one-half-pound shot thirty-seven feet. 1. Are my measurements good? 2. What are my strong and weak points? Is my chest, arm, and back development good? Please answer this in the next issue, and oblige, yours truly,

SAMMY DICKHOUSE.

Cincinnati, Ohio.

You will probably develop into quite a young athlete if you keep on at this rate. A few more years' growth will make you a very stocky young man.

PROF. FOURMEN: I would like to ask in regard to my measurements, etc. I am 17½ years old; weight, 144 pounds; height, 5 feet 10 inches; around shoulders, 42¾ inches; chest, normal, 36 inches; expanded, 40 inches; waist, 30 inches; calves, 15 inches; thigh, 21 inches; forearm, 10½ inches; biceps, normal, 12¾ inches; wrist, 8½ inches; neck, 15 inches. I can jump nine feet, standing. 1. How are my weight and measurements for my age? 2. Would I succeed in athletics? 3. What are my weak points? 4. What are my good points? Thanking you in advance, I remain, yours truly,

O. L. N.

Rippey, Ia.

You can become an athlete if you train properly, though at present you are not as well proportioned as you might be. Take a thorough course in a large gymnasium for a few months and you will see a marked improvement. Pay particular attention to your chest.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a TIP TOP reader, I thought I would ask you a few questions. My measurements: Height, 5 feet 3 inches; weight, 118 pounds; chest, contracted, 30 inches; normal, 31 inches; expanded, 35 inches; neck, 13½ inches; biceps, 13 inches; left forearm, 10 inches; right, 11 inches; waist, 30 inches; hips, 33 inches; thigh, 21 inches; left calf, 13½ inches; right, 14 inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. What are my weak points? 3. How can I strengthen my weak points? 4. What chances do I stand as an athlete? 5. When I run a little distance, or wrestle just for about five minutes, I have a pain around my heart, and some nights I have a pain there.

I cannot play baseball or football for that reason. Can you tell me what causes this, or can you tell me something good for it? I am 12 years 9 months old. Can off-arm twenty-eight pounds. Is this good? Hoping to see this in print some time soon, I remain, a TIP TOP reader,

R. W. Salisbury, Md.

You are an exceptionally well-developed boy. I do not notice any weak spots. Your biceps are quite large for one of your age. Take only light exercises for awhile to see if your heart is still affected. Should it bother you, then consult your family physician, for you probably have some organic trouble.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have read many TIP TOPS, and think them fine, and am going to take the liberty to ask a few questions. I am 12 years old and am 5 feet 1 inch in height. Weight, 86½ pounds; chest, normal, 27 inches; contracted, 24 inches; expanded, 30 inches; right bicep, 8 inches; left, 7½ inches; hips, 30½ inches; calves, 12 inches; forearms, 15½ inches; neck, 13½ inches; ankles, 10 inches; shoulders, 35 inches; knee, 13 inches; waist, 28 inches. How are my measurements? Where are my weak points? I can put the shot sixteen feet; sling the hammer thirty-five feet. Please send me the catalogue and the number my answer comes in. With many good wishes to the TIP TOP, I am, yours truly,

GILBERT PARKE.

Box 655, Beardstown, Ill.

Train to gain weight, as you are lacking in this respect by several pounds. Exercises for chest expansion, like pulley weights, are what you need principally in addition to this.

PROF. FOURMEN: Having read the TIP TOP WEEKLY for over a year, I take the liberty to ask you a few questions. I am 15 years 9 months old, am 5 feet 8 inches tall, and weigh 145 pounds. My measurements are: Neck, 13 inches; shoulders, across, 19 inches; chest, normal, 34 inches; expanded, 37 inches; right bicep, 13 inches; left, 13 inches; right forearm, 13 inches; left, 12 inches; right wrist, 7 inches; left, 7 inches; waist, 27 inches; right calf, 13 inches; left, 13 inches. How are my measurements? What are my weak points? How can I remedy them? Is my weight all right for my height? Yours truly,

Payne, Ohio.

The weight is about right. You have a fair pair of biceps, but the calves are not up to standard. Chest expansion is good, though the size of your chest should be several inches larger. Running, deep-breathing exercises, and general gymnasium work will show a marked change in you in six months' time.

PROF. FOURMEN: I herein send to you the measurements of myself and a friend, my own being: Neck, 15 inches; chest, normal, 32 inches; expanded, 35 inches; shoulders, 17 inches; length of arm, 28 inches; bicep, normal, 9 inches; expanded, 10½ inches; wrists, 6 inches; waist, 29 inches; thighs, 18 inches; calves, 13½ inches; height, 5 feet 8¼ inches; weight, 130 pounds. I am 16 years old, and ride a wheel, punch the bag, pull the chest weights, use dumb-bells and Indian clubs; run, play baseball, and try to improve my physical condition as much as possible. Please tell

me what you think of my measurements, and point out my weak points.

My friend's measurements are: Neck, 16 inches; chest, normal, 36 inches; expanded, 38 inches; shoulders, 19 inches; length of arms, 28½ inches; bicep, normal, 10½ inches; expanded, 12½ inches; wrists, 7 inches; waist, 30 inches; thighs, 20½ inches; calves, 13½ inches; height, 5 feet 6 inches; weight, 138 pounds. He is 17 years old, and wishes to know how to become tall. He works at night in a bakery, and his shoulders trouble him with sharp pains. He would like to know how to cure these. He rides, boxes, plays football and baseball, and would like you to pass your opinion on his measurements; also to give your advice and point out his weak spots. Hoping to see this in TIP TOP, which I read every week, I remain, yours respectfully,

WRIGHTSON KELLEY.

393 South Eleventh Street, Newark, N. J.

You need fifteen pounds to bring you up to standard weight. Continue your present course of training, but do not work too hard or you will wear off flesh as you put it on. Your friend is better proportioned than you are, but this is due to his being shorter and heavier. The pains he complains of may be due to over-exercise. To one who is working hard all day at manual or semi-manual labor, exercise that taxes his powers is as bad as lack of exercise. He should be moderate.

PROF. FOURMEN: May I ask your opinion of my measurements? I am 16 years 4 months old and weigh 145 pounds, stripped. These are my measurements: Height, 5 feet 9¾ inches; forearm, 10 inches; biceps, 11 inches; thigh, 19¼ inches; calf, 14 inches; chest, normal, 31¾ inches; expanded, 34¾ inches; waist, 28 inches; neck, 13½ inches. Thanking you in advance, I remain, a steady reader of the TIP TOP,

E. I. C.

New Hampton, Ia.

The lack of weight is what you have to contend with. Train to take on about twenty pounds.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a constant reader of TIP TOP, I take the liberty to ask you a few questions. I think that the subject of these questions is out of the ordinary of those you receive per day. I am 15 years of age, 5 feet 3 inches high, and weigh 118 pounds. For nearly five years I have been subject to a certain kind of frost. On a cold or windy day the blood leaves my fingers and they become as white as those of a corpse, and they have no feeling in them until I can get them back into circulation. While getting back to their original color the tips of my fingers first turn blue. It is not that way with my toes. I have refrained from seeing a doctor before reading your advice (1) as to the cause of it and (2) what will cure it. Hoping that this will not take up much of your space, and to see this in print, I remain, yours truly,

B. FAIRSTEIN.

Philadelphia, Pa.

When you get up in the morning, hold your arms out straight from the shoulders, and open and close the hands rapidly until you get tired. Rest a little and begin again. This will get up proper circulation, and the trouble will disappear.

PROF. FOURMEN: As I have read TIP TOP for quite awhile and become interested in it, I thought I would send you some of my measurements. Age, 15 years 2 months; height, 5 feet 5 inches; weight, 126 pounds; neck, 14 inches; from shoulder to shoulder, 17 inches; chest, normal, 32 inches; expanded, 35½ inches; upper arm muscle, expanded, 12½ inches; normal, 9½ inches; wrist, 6½ inches; lower arm muscle, 10 inches; waist, 29 inches; thigh, 19½ inches; calf, 13 inches; ankle, 8 inches. How are my measurements? How can I increase my strength? I play full-back on our football team and catch for our baseball team. Sometimes in throwing to second-base, my shoulder pains me so I cannot stay in the whole game. I would like to exchange postals with boys and girls all over the world. Hoping to see this in TIP TOP in a few weeks, I remain, as ever, a loyal Tip Topper, yours truly,

GEO. HALL.

325 Detroit Street, Flint, Mich.

Your weight is just right, while your chest development is excellent. The trouble with your arm is that you probably put too much strain upon it. The moment it pains you must stop,

or it will become worse. Rub it with arnica when it troubles you. This winter you ought to have a thorough rest for the spring. Probably it will be in good shape then if you do not endanger it by practising any pitching this winter.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am very much interested in athletics. Please tell me what you think of my measurements? I am a boy 14 years old; height, 4 feet 7 inches; chest, normal, 29 inches; expanded, 31 inches; neck, 12 inches; wrists, 5 inches; biceps, 11 inches; weight, 89 pounds. I can jump 6 feet 6 inches, standing broad jump; 12 feet, running; 3 feet 6½ inches, high jump. Hoping to see this in your TIP TOP, yours truly,

Ottawa.

A TIP TOP ADMIRER.

The development of your chest should be gratifying. It is larger than most boys of your age and height who have about the same weight. Your records are very good for one who, I take it, is just beginning to follow athletic exercises.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a constant reader of TIP TOP since it was first published, I take the liberty to ask you a few questions. I am fifteen years old; height, 4 feet 11 1-3 inches; weight, 84½ pounds; neck, 11¾ inches; shoulders, 14 inches; biceps, 9 inches; forearm, 8½ inches; wrist, 5¾ inches; thigh, 16 inches; calf, 11¾ inches; ankle, 7½ inches; waist, 25 inches; chest, normal, 28½ inches; expanded, 31 3-5 inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. What exercises do I need? Thanking you in advance, I remain,

CHARLES THOMPSON.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

You need pulley weights for the arms. The chest development is very good.

PROF. FOURMEN: Having read TIP TOP for a good while, I take the liberty of asking you a few questions. I am 13 years 3 months old, 5 feet 1 inch tall, and weigh 97 pounds. Neck, 13 inches; calf, 12 inches; waist, 24¾ inches; ankle, 9 inches; chest, normal, 30 inches; expanded, 33 inches; thigh, 18 inches; from shoulder to shoulder, 16 inches. Records: Standing broad jump, 8 feet 4 inches; running, 13 feet 10 inches; running high jump, 52 inches; standing, 38 inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. What are my strong points? 3. What are my weak points, and how can I develop them? 4. How are my records? Hoping this does not reach the waste-basket, I remain, yours truly,

O. H. EBERHART.

Evansville, Ind.

1. Fair.

2. Chest.

3. Calves, waist, thighs. Bicycling, bending exercises, and running.

4. Very good for a boy of your age.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a constant reader of TIP TOP, I take the liberty of asking you a few questions regarding my measurements. I am 17 years old, 5 feet 11 inches tall, and weigh 152 pounds. Chest, normal, 35 inches; expanded, 38 inches; neck, 14 inches; shoulders, 18 inches; forearm, 10½ inches; biceps, 11½ inches; waist, 30½ inches; thighs, 20 inches; calves, 14 inches; wrist, 6½ inches. How are my measurements? Which are my weak points, and which are my strong ones? How can I strengthen my weak points? Hoping to see this in print soon, I am, yours truly,

R. H. P.

West Bend, Wis.

Twenty more pounds would make you much better proportioned. With such a deficiency your measurements are all lacking in a few inches, but a few months' faithful work in a gymnasium will remedy that.

"GOLDEN HOURS."

Boys, have you any old numbers of Golden Hours? If so, see what numbers are among them and write me, stating price. I will pay liberally to complete my files. Address WILLIAMS, Station "O," Box 24, New York City.

THE TIP TOP WEEKLY

ISSUED EVERY FRIDAY.

MOST ATTRACTIVE COLORED COVERS

The tales of adventure and school life published in TIP TOP are generally admitted to be without a rival. Beware of imitations. There is only one Frank Merriwell and only one Burt L. Standish to write about him. TIP TOP contains a department devoted to all kinds of sports in which questions regarding physical development, the best exercises, and all questions on athletic subjects are cheerfully answered by Mr. Standish.

PRICE FIVE CENTS PER COPY

For sale by all newsdealers or sent to any address upon receipt of Five Cents in money or postage stamps

HERE ARE THE LATEST TITLES :

494—Dick Merriwell's Return; or, The Reappearance at Fardale.	504—Dick Merriwell's Four Fists; or, The Champion of the Chanson.
495—Dick Merriwell's Restoration; or, Whipping the Team into Shape.	505—Dick Merriwell's Dashing Game; or, The Fast Five from Fairport.
496—Dick Merriwell's Value; or, The Success of Square Sport.	506—Frank Merriwell's Tigers; or, Wiping Out the Railroad Wolves.
497—Dick Merriwell's "Dukes"; or, His Fight with Himself.	507—Frank Merriwell's Treasure Guard; or, The Defenders of the Pay Train.
498—Dick Merriwell's Drop-Kick; or, Chester Arlington's Team of Tigers.	508—Frank Merriwell's Flying Fear; or, The Ghost of the Yaqui.
499—Dick Merriwell's Defeat; or, How Arlington Won the Second Game.	509—Dick Merriwell in Maine; or, Sport and Peril in the Winter Woods.
500—Dick Merriwell's Chance; or, Taming the Tigers of Fairport.	510—Dick Merriwell's Polo Team; or, The Rattlers of the Roller Rink.
501—Dick Merriwell's Stride; or, The Finish of the Cross Country Run.	511—Dick Merriwell in the Ring; or, The Champion of His Class.
502—Dick Merriwell's Wing-Shift; or, The Great Thanksgiving Day Game.	512—Frank Merriwell's New Idea; or, The American School of Athletic Development.
503—Dick Merriwell's Skates; or, Playing Ice Hockey for Every Point.	513—Frank Merriwell's Troubles; or, Enemies in the Fold.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS

of our libraries and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Cut out and fill in the following order blank and send it to us with the price of the books you want and we will send them to you by return mail. **POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.**

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

190

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find.....cents for which please send me:

.....copies of Tip Top	Nos.....
..... " " Nick Carter	Nos.....
..... " " Diamond Dick	Nos.....
..... " " Buffalo Bill	Nos.....
..... " " Brave and Bold	Nos.....
..... " " Rough Rider	Nos.....

Name..... Street and No..... Town..... State.....

THE FAVORITE LIST OF FIVE-CENT LIBRARIES



TIP TOP WEEKLY

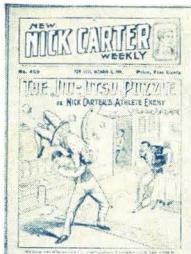
Frank and Dick Merriwell are two brothers whose adventures in college and on the athletic field are of intense interest to the American boy of to-day. They prove that a boy does not have to be a rowdy to have exciting sport.

Buffalo Bill Stories



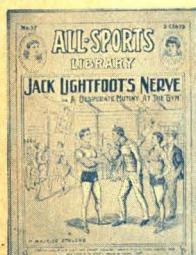
Buffalo Bill is the hero of a thousand exciting adventures among the Redskins. These are given to our boys only in the Buffalo Bill Stories. They are bound to interest and please you.

Nick Carter Weekly



We know, boys, that there is no need of introducing to you Nicholas Carter, the greatest sleuth that ever lived. Every number containing the adventures of Nick Carter has a peculiar, but delightful, power of fascination.

All-Sports Library



All sports that boys are interested in, are carefully dealt with in the All-Sports Library. The stories deal with the adventures of plucky lads while indulging in healthy pastimes.

Paul Jones Weekly



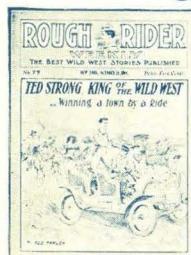
Do not think for a second, boys, that these stories are a lot of musty history, just sugar-coated. They are all new tales of exciting adventure on land and sea, in all of which boys of your own age took part.

Brave and Bold



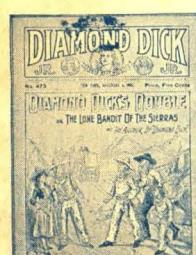
Every boy who prefers variety in his reading matter, ought to be a reader of Brave and Bold. All these were written by authors who are past masters in the art of telling boys' stories. Every tale is complete in itself.

Rough Rider Weekly



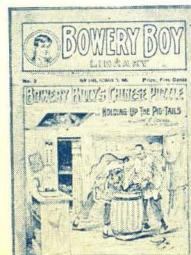
Ted Strong was appointed deputy marshal by accident, but he resolves to use his authority and rid his ranch of some very tough bullies. He does it in such a slick way that everyone calls him "King of the Wild West" and he certainly deserves his title.

Diamond Dick Weekly



The demand for stirring stories of Western adventure is admirably filled by this library. Every up-to-date boy ought to read just how law and order are established and maintained on our Western plains by Diamond Dick, Bertie, and Handsome Harry.

Bowery Boy Library



The adventures of a poor waif whose only name is "Bowery Billy." Billy is the true product of the streets of New York. No boy can read the tales of his trials without imbibing some of that resource and courage that makes the character of this homeless boy stand out so prominently.